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INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE





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REEK LITERATURE

WILLIAM [illegible] LAWTON

PROFESSOR [illegible] AND LITERATURE

NEW YORK
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INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE

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WILLIAM CRANSTON LAWTON

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1903



GOETHE WEIMAR



INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE

BY

WILLIAM CRANSTON LAWTON

PROFESSOR OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
IN ADELPHI COLLEGE

Τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἐκεῖνοι κατέλιπον ἐν βιβλίοις γράψαντες, ἀνελίττων κοινῇ σὺν τοῖς φίλοις διέρχομαι καί, ἄν τι ὁρῶμεν ἀγαθόν, ἐκλεγόμεθα καὶ μέγα νομίζομεν κέρδος, ἐὰν ἀλλήλοις φίλοι γιγνώμεθα.

SOCRATES in Xenophon's "Memorabilia," I. 6, § 14.
(Cf. translation, infra, p. 306.)

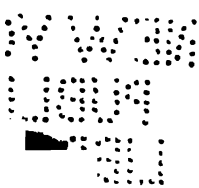
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INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE



GREEK LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

SPIRITUALLY, at least, all the great races of civilized Europe, Greek, Italian, Kelt, Teuton, Slav, are closely akin. It has been generally believed that they descend from one clan, or from a group of tribes that once dwelt beside each other in some aboriginal seat of "Aryan" man. Even the Hindu, Persian, Armenian, were accounted as merely Asiatic branches of this great human stream. This theory has of late been severely attacked. But certainly the languages of all these races, by their similar structure far more than by mere vocabulary, plainly reveal a common origin. Folk-lore, social forms, religious beliefs, point, only less plainly, in the same direction.

This kinship, if such it be, was indeed forgotten for many generations, and its discovery in the nineteenth century was the chief triumph of the young science known as comparative philology. Yet a certain bond of sympathy has doubtless always been a real factor in European history. That history is one unbroken tale of many chapters. Through all the bloody feuds of three thousand years, these races have in no case felt any such physical repugnance to each other as divides, for instance, white and yellow men. Even when the warriors of a people were destroyed or driven out, as were the Keltic foemen of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, or the princes,

knights, and troubadours of thirteenth century Provence, at least many captive women shared the homes and hearts of the victors.

Hence all these stocks have intermingled, naturally and irrevocably. All the present nations are mixed races, and their likeness is greater than their diversity. The institutions, the manners, the thoughts of modern Europe are merging more and more in one channel. This is, of course, especially true, and has always been true, of the higher intellectual life. Least of all arts is literature to be confined to a single people, or indeed by any limits of time and space.

First of European men, the Greek awoke to self-consciousness, strove to remember his past and to record his present, struggled to grasp and utter the meaning of life, to adjust himself to Nature, to dream of divinity. Though indebted for earliest suggestions to Phœnicia, to Egypt, doubtless to Chaldea or even the remoter Orient, the Hellene had a remarkably self-centred and natural development. Having also, beyond any other man, the artistic instinct, he devised numberless forms so simple and fit as to be imperishable. Such types are familiar to all students of architecture, sculpture, and the minor plastic arts. The word *alphabet* carries its own lesson, while epic, lyric, drama, tragedy, comedy, history, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, logic, are no less inevitably Greek names for Greek concepts.

Hence the present volume must be introductory in a double sense. Through the gate of Hellenism we enter the goodly demesne of European literature itself.

Even to Greek literature this book is strictly an introduction only. It mentions comparatively few names, and attempts to discuss only those supreme masterpieces which have a large interest and value; which have influenced, or should influence, the imagination, the taste, the forms, of

later creative artists. No attempt is made to rival the completeness in detail of a classical dictionary. Lost works and their authors are, as a rule, hardly treated at all. The real end of the story is the death of Plato and Demosthenes, or the loss of freedom at Chæronea.

The larger divisions of the subject are dictated by the orderly successive development of epic, lyric, and drama; while the principal forms of prose, history and oratory, appear later, all but simultaneously. The philosophic dialogue is the original creation of the greatest unmetrical stylist who ever lived, and it has not, like the other Greek forms, dominated the usage of later literature. Theocritos, the pastoral poet, Plutarch, the biographer, and perhaps Lucian, the satirist, are the later creators of important new forms; the Greek authors, writing after the Macedonian conquest, who have still the utmost importance for their own sake.

Adequate acquaintance with any literature is to be gained only by the repeated loving perusal of its masterpieces. From the first page we take for granted that the student has at hand his Homer, either in the original or in a translation which indicates the numbering of the Greek lines. Hence the comparative brevity of our chapters on the epics, and the failure to cite "specimen passages." To know the Iliad and Odyssey in detail is almost an education in itself. It is certainly the one wide-open gate to all Greek and Latin literature, and to that large classical element in our own arts and life, which is still very inadequately realized. Herodotos, Plato, Plutarch, the tragic three, are hardly less indispensable.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is not in English a satisfactory large history of Greek literature. Mahaffy's, though often polemic and eccentric, is doubtless the best. The volumes of "Ancient Classics for English Readers"

(Lippincott) cover nearly the whole field in interesting, popular fashion, and much more in detail than this work. Readers of French should by all means consult constantly A. and M. Croiset's "Histoire de la Littérature Grecque" (Paris, 5 vols., 1887-99). The present volume leans most heavily on W. von Christ's "Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur" (Munich, Beck, 3d edition, 1898). The specialists will be familiar with such authorities as Bergk. The ancient Greek lives of the poets and literary men generally are collected in a very useful book, Westermann's "Vitarum Scriptores Græci Minores" (Brunswick, 1845).

Still more necessary for use in connection with this volume is some political history of Greece. If Grote, or the more up-to-date English translation of Holm, is inaccessible, the student himself should purchase the single volume of Oman (Longmans), or the yet briefer though excellent sketch of Professor Botsford (Macmillan). Of course such an atlas as Kiepert's is indispensable for any classical student.

Some manual of mythology, like Gayley's "Classical Myths" (Ginn) or one of the various revisions of Bulfinch's "Age of Fable," should be at hand. Steuding's "Mythology" (Macmillan), a primer in form, is really a learned and thorough little book. No exhaustive inquiry as to mythological problems can be made without Roscher's "Ausführliches Lexikon der classichen Mythologie."

The Macmillan translations of Iliad and Odyssey by Andrew Lang and his associates give on each page the number of the Homeric book, and of the first and last line of the original. Hence with practice they can be easily used to verify the frequent marginal references here given. Mr. Palmer's "Odyssey" is also a very faithful version. German readers will prefer Voss's "Ilias" and "Odyssee," translated line for line in resonant hexameters.

A copiously illustrated work of reference on art and archæology, like Baumeister's "Denkmäler," is greatly to be desired. Perhaps Harper's "Classical Dictionary of Literature and Antiquities" is the best single illustrated English book available for general supplementary use with text and dictionary. Tarbell's "History of Greek Art" is a brief recent study of a more limited subject by a most competent hand.



BOOK I

THE EARLY EPIC

"Still do we hear Andromache's lament,
All Troy from her foundation toppling see,
The toil of Ajax, Hector bound and dragged
By steeds beneath the city's crown of towers;
All this the Muse Mæonian reveals.
No town may claim the poet for her own,
But every region, in each zone, as well."

—*Anthologia Palatina, IX.*, 97.

CHAPTER I

THE MYTHIC WORLD

HOMER and Herodotos are perhaps the best story-tellers for youth that have ever yet appeared. Every reader of this book will already have some familiarity with British and American poets: will be aware also that masterpieces have been produced in many other languages, which can be only roughly and partially interpreted into our English speech. But with Greek history, art, letters, we must some day begin that connected thoughtful survey of past European life, recorded for thirty centuries, which alone can make clear to us the meaning and aims of our own national or social organisms. The Present is the child of the Past. The Greeks or Romans, Florentine or Elizabethan men and women, are indeed in many ways unlike ourselves. Change, constant and profound, is a necessity to life: yet there is not one decisive break in all that long tale, from Homer to the present day.

Two important truths may here be brought together. First, human nature is in essence ever the same. The elemental passions must always prompt our actions, as the woman, the hero, the rival, reappear in every love-story. Secondly, the long progress of the race is largely repeated in each new human being. Any grown-up who reads "Hiawatha" with children, or with youths the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon, will be forcibly reminded, that what he has outlived is yet as the breath of life to younger folk. A certain childish quality is felt at times in Homer, al-

most constantly in Herodotos. It heightens the charm and value of both. It is the fresh breath from the youth-time of European man.

As we unroll the volume of Homer, it must be remembered, above all, that this life-like panorama is not a realistic but an idealized picture. So, indeed, is all poetry. Long before the need of authentic records felt, old men relate, to the wondering youth of the clan, marvellous tales of earlier days. Superhuman beings, often at first mere personified forces of nature, mingle naturally with such traditions. The pride of noble or royal rank is aroused, and claims divine parentage. Crude, shapeless, unmoral at first, these tales develop ethical value and beauty as they are retold on the lips of such a race as the Hellenes. The artistic instinct awakes. Many rude hands touch the harp-strings, and move the heart, but when the supreme master arises his forerunners are forgotten. Yet the songs of cruder centuries, the whole life of a people, are needed to render possible a Niebelungenlied, a Roland song, an Edda, an Iliad.

> "Ages of heroes fought and fell
> That Homer in the end might tell."

Just what conditions made possible the Homeric poetry we shall doubtless never know. Whether the composers of the Iliad were one, or two, or many, it is still the chief result, the sole monument, of countless toiling generations. Ruder models, traditional subjects more or less historic and real, generous and appreciative hearers, the master-singer must have. His noble art cannot spring up among mere savages or plodding boors. Homer's general picture of life was certainly not merely his creation. Even if unreal, it was largely already the accepted tradition of a people. As perfected by him it dominated the imagination of the

Greeks and Romans till they were Christianized, and still affects vitally all modern poetry. Hence the need of seeing clearly, at least in outline, the mythic world: the environment of human life as the Iliad reveals it.

The Homeric man, like Ivanhoe or Roderick Dhu, is a fighter. The hero may have been granted his choice between a brief tragic and glorious career, or a long peaceful existence: but there can be no doubt of his decision. Even the loving wife, who begs her lord to hold aloof from the struggle, joins the next instant in his prayer for their infant son:

Iliad, ix., 410–415.

"May it hereafter be said, 'He is better by far than his father,'
When he returns from the fray with the blood-stained armor of heroes,
When he has smitten the foe, and gladdened the heart of his mother."

Hector's prayer. Iliad, vi., 479–814.

Such is the culmination of the most pathetic scene in all the long drama.

Like Scott, again, or indeed like any loyal singer of a feudal and martial age, the Homeric poet accepts the strong, heroic king as the first need of a people. In Odysseus's absence Ithaca must relapse into anarchy, prince and folk are alike impoverished. A single travestied sketch of a popular demagogue hints the actual dawning of a more democratic age; but Thersites is made so ugly, so ignoble, so hateful to all men, that the courtly poet has probably here for once forgotten the laws of his art, and betrayed his own dread and bitter hatred of this new popular type, destined to be all too familiar in historic Hellas.

Iliad, ii., 211–277.

The Homeric king does not, indeed, resemble closely either the Oriental despot or the bloody tyrant of later Greece. Succeeding usually by right of descent, he holds

his place by wisdom and courage, as general, high-priest, and judge of final appeal. Odysseus's father, in decrepit age, has long ago abdicated: young Telemachos is jeered at, and even murderously waylaid, when he would assert his hereditary right. Odysseus himself, even after he has declared his identity, must fight for his hall, his wife, his throne, and finally atone for the blood shed in this self-defence.

Odyss., xxiv., 205-210.

Odyss., i., 367-387, and iv., 660-673.

No divinity hedges such a king. The chief clansmen with whom he sits in council often share also the royal name. The common people, indeed, are assembled only to hear and accept the decisions of their leaders, and never are allowed any real weight, in war or in peace.

Odyss., i., 394; viii., 390, etc.

Iliad, ii., 200, 203-205, etc.

Social conditions are extremely simple. The coppersmith and the carpenter are the chief artisans, and perhaps freemen. Works of art are rare, and generally imported from the East. Commerce is chiefly in the hands of the Phœnicians, and hardly distinguished from piracy. Money and writing are apparently unknown. The women spin and weave at home. A Greek has one wife, but captive women often fill his harem. Some sympathy is shown for their pitiful lot.

E.g., Iliad, xix., 290-302.

Especially is the early Hellene like the child and the savage, in his feeling of close kinship with the other forms of life that surround him. From sea-billow, spring, or grove, some gentle nymph may at any instant step forth to aid the weary hero. These minor local powers are immortal, yet capable of occasional happy wedlock with man. So river-gods are the ancestors of noble lines. Scamander fights before Troy both as a river and in human form. Odysseus, as a spent swimmer, feeling a fresh current running into the unknown sea, prays to the

Iliad, vi., 22; xiv., 444; xx., 384.

Iliad, xxi., 136; xx., 40.

god, who is as real as the stream. Remoter coasts, and the depths of the waters, are indeed peopled, naturally, with terrible monsters. Yet the chief danger is always from savage men: cannibals and gigantic ogres. Still, even in remotest fairyland, Odysseus finds the gentle and hospitable race of dancers, athletes, and sailors, the Phæacians.

Odyss., v., 445.

This disposition of the early Greek poet to reject monstrous and inhuman forms, to discover everywhere images of his own cheerful, sun-loving self, is best seen in his sketches of his highest gods. The family of supreme Zeus lives in a group of palaces on the summit of Olympos, which, in the Iliad at least, is definitely described as if it were the snow-capt peak in Thessaly. Zeus and his sister-wife, Hera, form the one Homeric example of a brawling, undignified married couple. Like mortal rulers, Zeus has inherited his kingship. His father Kronos, being incapable of death or senile decay, is imprisoned with his Titan brothers in a dungeon far beneath darkest Hades. The grandparents, Uranos and Ge, are but conscious personifications of Heaven and Earth.

Iliad, i., 606.

Iliad, i., 499.

Iliad, i., 518, 566, 579, etc.

Iliad, viii., 478–81; v., 898.

The "Uranian" gods generally are by origin doubtless nature-forces: but the man-loving Hellene is rarely conscious of any allegory. Zeus indeed, wrapt in black clouds, the lightning-hurler, is clearly the stormy firmament. Pallas Athene, his blue-eyed favorite daughter, who less often hurls his bolts, and the archer Apollo, the bringer of wrathful pestilence, of enlightenment, of truth, seem no less plainly to have been respectively the clear sky and the sun. These three powers are oftenest mentioned together in solemn oaths and prayers, which are naturally among the most ancient traditional forms of speech.

Iliad, xi., 45.

E.g., Iliad, ii., 371.

Other divine children of Zeus are Hephaistos, the smith and cunning worker generally; Ares, the rash war-god; Apollo's twin sister Artemis, the huntress; Aphrodite, the queen of love. Most familiar of all to men, however, is Hermes, the messenger. His usual Homeric epithet, misinterpreted by the later Greeks as Argus-slayer, seems to mean "the clearly seen."

In earlier ages at least, Zeus's throne has been seriously threatened by family conspiracy. His brothers, Hades, lord of the under-world, and Poseidon, the master of the sea, are according to some very early forms of the myth his elders, and certainly they still claim supremacy each in his own domain. Even Zeus's children discuss freely in council all his measures. Though he holds the scales of final decision, he also is, perhaps, but the puppet of the shrouded, inaccessible Fates, who vaguely represent cosmic law.

Iliad, I., 397-406.

The pathos of man's brief, uncertain, tumultuous life is deeply felt. Achilles especially, bereft and doomed, uses, toward the end of the Iliad, words of bitter pessimism: and though in the under-world, described in the Odyssey, he appears as a chivalric ghost, yet he utters there the verses for which, in particular, Plato would debar Homer, as an evil instructor of gallant youth, from his ideal republic:

"Rather would I be living a serf, and thrall to another,
E'en to a landless man, that hath but a scanty subsistence,
Than to be sovereign lord over all of the dead that have perished!"

Odyss., XI., 489-91.

Plato, Republic, 386 C.

Clearly, this first vivid picture of European life is no accurate prosaic account. History is as yet unthought of. The poet depends on divine inspiration, that is, upon his own free creative powers. Any homely and realistic details of contemporary life he gives us, if at all, uncon-

sciously and, as it were, reluctantly. He strives rather to depict a remote imagined past, beside which his own life and time are ignoble.

Of course much is realistic: but it can never be safely ravelled out. The golden thread of fancy runs through all the warp and woof. Achilles deprived of his mother, the lovely sea-nymph, of his magic armor, of his talking horse, freed from the doom that Fate holds visibly over his youthful head, would lose his identity altogether.

In this mythic world the Greek imagination lived to the end. No character mentioned in epic or heroic drama can be assigned with confidence to any century, or even regarded as an actual person at all. By far the best modern parallel is the tale of Arthur and Merlin, Guinevere and Lancelot. Mediævalism lies nearer to us, in time at least, and many elements of Arthurian legend may still be traced to their sources. Some details, therefore, may be safely marked as historically real. But the interest they excite does not depend at all upon any such investigation. Even so the Homeric poetry may often be literally true to a particular age and region. We only know that it is a beautiful, fascinating, and on the whole ennobling picture, appealing to us, and to all generations, as eternally and typically true to elemental human nature.

The greatest of all the Greek heroes is Heracles, the type of early man himself, mastering the rude forces of nature. King Theseus, the mythical organizer of Attica under Athenian leadership, is perhaps his most illustrious ally. Castor and Pollux, the semi-divine twins, also toilful friends of mankind, are in the same group. These and many others sailed upon the first ship, Argo, on the famous quest of the golden fleece, which Jason won at last through the love of the sorceress Medea.

These are the largest figures of the mythic world. Doubtless many poets before Homer had aided in making them

familiar to the early Greeks: but their works, if ever written, are all lost. A very late Greek epic, like Apollonius Rhodius's "Argonautica," or, better, our own English poet William Morris's narrative poem, "Life and Death of Jason," must now be heard in their stead. A single phrase in the Odyssey hints that the voyage of the Argo is known to all men, while other passages reveal an eager demand for fresh and new tales.

Odyss., xii., 70.

Odyss., i., 351-52.

Among Homer's heroes, the wise and loquacious old Nestor is the only survivor from that mightier generation. In his youth Heracles, among many more famous and arduous tasks, had captured, almost single-handed, this very city of Troy, which all the flower of Greek chivalry now assail and besiege in vain for ten years, until Odysseus's cunning carries out the will of the fates and the rude slow justice of the Olympian gods. Perhaps the singer of Achilles's wrath showed a certain modest loyalty to his masters in thus selecting for his theme a lesser exploit of a degenerate age. Yet the work of his genius has not only survived all earlier Greek poetry, but has lifted the Troy-myth to a supreme position among the tales that are told by men.

Iliad, v., 638-42.

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On the general nature of mythology Andrew Lang's "Custom and Myth," or his article "Mythology" in the Britannica, is illuminating. On the origin and nature of poetry Professor Gummere's book, "Beginnings of Poetry" (Macmillan) is most thorough and satisfactory. Dr. Keller's "Homeric Society" (Longmans) is full of stimulus and detailed learning. Its fundamental thesis, that our evidence as to the "Homeric Age" is accurate and documentary, is as opposed as could well be to our own view. Dr. Keller usually ignores the supernatural elements—*e.g.*, the horses that talk or fly heavenward, the gods that contend with men, etc.

CHAPTER II

THE TROY MYTH

More than a thousand years before Christ, there actually stood, in the middle of the Trojan plain, near the Hellespont, on a hillock now called in Turkish *"Hissarlik,"* a small citadel surrounded by substantial walls. The spade of the archæologist has revealed not only this but earlier and later hill-cities, which have held in succession the same commanding site. Much more striking ruins of prehistoric fortresses or palaces have been uncovered at Mycenæ and Tiryns, in the Argolid. There was great wealth of precious metals in these kindred strongholds on both sides the Ægean. The style of the vases, cups, necklaces, etc., is very early, sumptuous but crude, clearly influenced by Oriental ideas. It has but remote kinship with the art of the later Greeks. No inscriptions or coins are found in the same strata with these works of plastic art.

The details of these discoveries by Dr. Heinrich Schliemann and his successors make an intensely interesting and instructive story. Investigations no less fruitful are now in progress in various parts of the Ægean, notably in Crete, and in Cyprus. The early history of architecture, pottery, sculpture, on Greek soil, and its exact relation to Phœnician, Egyptian, and Chaldean culture, may be more and more confidently sketched out. But this kindred science of archæology will probably never cast more than a dim cross-light upon the greatest of literary marvels, the existence and transmission of the Homeric poems.

According to Homer, Troy, or Ilios, was a great and

wealthy city, which had long held imperial power in Western Asia, and was still able, in her direst need, to summon vassals even from far-off Lycia, and keep them ten years under arms in her defence. Poseidon and Apollo had built the walls for the ungrateful former king Laomedon. To Anchises, near kinsman of the royal line, Aphrodite has borne a son, the noble Æneas. There have been countless other marks of especial divine favor. Most of the gods still love the doomed city better than all other abodes of men.

Iliad, vii., 452–53, and xxi., 442–57.

But Priam's son Paris, or Alexander, in his wide sea-wanderings, has carried off from Sparta Helen, the lovely wife of the gentle king Menelaos, whose brother Agamemnon, lord of Mycenæ and of the Peloponnesos generally, is a mightier prince than historical Hellas was ever to know. As feudal overlord he is able to summon all the chieftains of continental Greece to rescue Helen and punish Alexander. Priam, swayed by his perverse son, refuses to make full atonement: and the end is inevitable.

The poet probably did not regard his Trojans as of the same stock as the Greeks; but the open polygamy of Priam is the only striking difference which we notice. The two hosts worship the same gods, converse freely in council or field, exchange armor or gifts with living opponents, and don the warlike gear of their slain foemen. The effective fighting is done by the chiefs, in war-chariots which remind us rather of Assyria than of any historical Hellenic age. In all the ten summers no one has recrossed the seas, nor has any news come, it would seem, from home. Yet Achilles, threatening to return homeward, declares that with fair weather he can and will reach Phthia, his little kingdom in Southeastern Thessaly, on the third morning. Such contradictions are woven into the very woof of the romance.

Iliad, vi., 230–36; vii., 303–5.

Iliad, ix., 363; Plato, Crito, 44 B.



PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE

Pompeian Wall-painting from the House of the Dioscuri



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Agamemnon, though greedy, bad-tempered, and wrong-headed at every crisis, is fearless in the fray. He is, however, by no means the best warrior of the host. The resistless champion is Achilles, whose immortal mother Thetis, loveliest of the water-nymphs, has returned, like Undine in Fouqué's romance, to the depths of the sea. Dwelling in the halls of her father Nereus, she and her sisters watch despairingly the swift, tragic career of her son. The Olympian gods themselves look on with interest hardly less intense. The Trojan war troubles their banquets and divides their councils. Yet all, on earth and Olympos, know that vengeance and justice must come at last.

Iliad, vi., 447-49.; iv., 164-65.

At this point the student is fully prepared to read consecutively the pages of the Iliad, from which nearly all these details have been culled. But this poem, long as it is, will by no means complete the tale. Its avowed subject is merely a quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. The entire time covered by it is but fifty-one days, toward the close of the war.

The larger question remains undecided when the poem ends. Prince Hector, indeed, perishes; but he had apparently remained through all the ten years cooped up with his allies in the city, until Achilles's absence gave him courage to sally forth.

Iliad, ix., 352-55.

However, we get frequent glimpses of events far outside the direct issue of "Achilles's Wrath." As the origin and past duration of the war are indicated, and must indeed have been well known to the first hearers of the great lay, so the end also is clearly foreseen. Hector is aware that his kinsmen will be put to the sword and his wife dragged away into slavery. That Achilles himself must first perish is thrice prophesied: by his mother,

Iliad, vi., 447-49.; iv., 164-65.

Iliad, ix., 352-55.

Iliad, xviii., 95-96; xix., 409, 416-17; xxii., 359-60.

by his horse, and, plainest of all, by Hector, who, as he gasps out his dying breath, exults in the prompt vengeance on Achilles,

"On that day when Paris and Phœbos Apollo,
Valorous though thou art, at the Scæan gate will destroy thee."

Such allusions must have been well understood. Yet we shall see that numberless details have been added to the myth at each repetition, even down to Tennyson's "Œnone" and Andrew Lang's "Helen of Troy." This is indeed the best evidence that the charm of the tale is imperishable.

The tragic end of Troy is best known to us from the Latin Æneid, though Virgil was as usual imitating Greek originals, which have since perished. The craft of Odysseus finally avails where the young heroes of the race have failed and fallen. The Greeks pretend to sail away, leaving a chosen band concealed in the huge wooden horse. This the Trojans are induced to drag to their citadel, thus making easy their own destruction before the next morning dawns. To this stratagem Menelaos in the Odyssey makes allusion, and it may well be an original feature of the myth.

Odyss., iv., 272.

That the destruction of the city was utter and final was the general notion of the ancients. It is curious, however, that certain passages indicate Homer's belief in a restoration of Troy, and that too, apparently, by Æneas, whom Homer repeatedly declares to be Aphrodite's son.

Thus in an Olympian council Poseidon says:

"Hateful already to Kronian Zeus are the children of Priam.
Now shall the might of Æneas be *ruler over the Trojans*,
He, and his children's children, who shall be hereafter begotten."

Iliad, xx., 306-8.

To rule over Troians is not necessarily to reign in Troy. There may indeed be a legendary base for that later legend which carried Aeneas to Italy and made him a progenitor of Romulus. It was not strange that Greek flatterers at Roman court should have wished to connect with the ancient rulers' stronghold on the Palatine this mysterious and high-born of Trojan heroes. Yet the impression is that the Homeric poet connects these words to justify a real line actually ruling the Troad in his day and claiming descent from Aineas. The latter was not only married to Priam's daughter but was, through his father, himself of a true Anatolian stock, not involved in Laomedon's impiety, nor perhaps in Paris's sin. But at any rate the imperial glory of Priam's reign had passed for ever.

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Better than Dr. Schliemann's own books is "The Mycenaean Age" by Tsountas and Manatt. For a discussion of new Homeric questions as the Troy-myth see the author's "Art and Humanity in Homer," Chapter VII.

CHAPTER III

THE ILIAD

THE first and greatest of epics, despite its name, deals directly with only one minor episode of the Ilios-myth. During the tedious, uneventful siege, Achilles has led many forays, storming twenty-three lesser towns of the Troad, enriching all the Greeks with his captives and other booty. On the last such raid he slew the father and seven brothers of Hector's wife Andromache. In the same city, Thebè, was taken a young girl, daughter of Chryses, Apollo's beloved priest. Why she was staying there we are not told. Her home, Chrysa, seems to have been much nearer Troy. Agamemnon, to whom she is allotted, forced by Apollo's wrath to release her, foolishly seizes in her stead Achilles's prize of honor, the princess Briseis, who was probably to have become the wife of her captor. Thus Agamemnon commits, not in love or passion, but in mere wantonness, the very crime of Paris. Achilles remarks eloquently on this inconsistency when refusing his chief's belated gifts of conciliation.

Iliad, ix., 328-31.

Iliad, vi., 414-23.

Iliad, i., 366-69.

Iliad, xix., 297-99.

Iliad, ix., 338-48.

Achilles long refuses to re-enter the war; but after many Greek heroes have been slain or wounded he lends his armor to his gentle friend Patroclos, and reluctantly allows him to take the field. When Hector has slain Patroclos, Achilles, for love of his friend, and for vengeance, ends his feud, obtains fresh armor overnight, through his divine mother, from the smith-god Hephaistos, and slays

Hector in single combat, though aided most unfairly by Pallas Athene. This last may be another reminder how frankly the Greek prefers craft to mere stubborn valor.

Such is the essential plot of the poem. But instead of a mere Achilleid it becomes a true Iliad, as Grote remarks, through the long episodes describing the exploits of various heroes. Diomedes in particular, in the first day's fighting, far surpasses Achilles's actual feats, and even wounds both Ares and Aphrodite. In the most famous of all Homeric passages, a visit of Hector to Ilios is described at great length, while the battle in the plain waits for the Trojan commander-in-chief. Here the poet seems in quite as full sympathy with the people of Priam as with the invaders. Again, the finest utterance as to the princely duty of valor and self-sacrifice is made by Sarpedon in Book XII. This mortal son of Zeus is serving under Hector as commander of the allied Lycians. Such passages of the poem have an especial bearing on the question of authorship, since local pride would suggest them to an Asiatic singer.

Iliad, vi., 237-502.

"Art and Humanity," pp. 51-70.

The last book but one is devoted to athletic games celebrated in Patroclos's honor about the barrow raised to his memory, under which Achilles also expects full soon to lie. In the final scene, old king Priam, guided safely by Hermes, goes down to Achilles's cabin on the shore, and begs back Hector's body for burial. This closing scene is worked out with noble dramatic pathos, and lifts the whole tale to a much higher ethical level. Whether it was intended in the original plan is another question.

Perhaps the most striking quality in the Homeric poetry is its dramatic vividness. Thus in the first book the scene shifts from the plague-stricken camp, the council of chiefs, and Achilles's tent, to Nereus's halls beneath the sea, to the lonely beach, to Chrysa and the ship that speeds

thither and returns: and lastly to the great hall of Zeus. Yet on the wings of the poet's imagination we are transported, without effort, from watery depths even to the snow-clad peaks of Olympos.

Except in the striking case of Thersites, Homer hardly betrays himself by criticising, or even praising, his characters. As a rule he merely gives them one or more respectful adjectives. This "fixed epithet" is sometimes almost grotesque, as when "golden-throned Hera" goes to bed, "trailing-robed Helen" hurries through the streets, or "bright-helmeted Hector" must doff his casque to allay the fears of his baby boy.

Iliad, i., 609–11.
Iliad, iii., 228.
Iliad, vi., 440.

For the most part these men and women reveal themselves to us by swift, impetuous action. Such a gallery of unmistakable portraits has not been created by any later author except Shakespeare. The coquetry of Helen, practised, in vain, even on Hector; the motherly love of Hecuba, the wifely fears of Andromache, reveal these three women's hearts to us within a single short episode. Menelaos's mild nature and Agamemnon's harsher spirit, the soldierly silence under rebuke of the veteran Diomedes, and his lesser comrade's indignant frankness, are clearly brought out within a few lines.

Iliad, vi., 349–56.
Iliad, vi., 37–62.
Iliad, iv., 365–418.

A larger contrast is felt between the happy wedlock of Hector and Andromache, and the comradeship of Achilles and gentle Patroclos. Here our modern feeling, reinforced by the extravagant apotheosis of woman in the days of chivalry, rouses a warmer sympathy for Hector, which no Greek would fully understand. Passionate friendship of man with man was, for the Hellenic mind, the purest and mightiest incentive to noble living.

Odysseus is in the Iliad a minor character, though warmly

admired. Decidedly more prominent, for instance, is the stubborn and rather stupid Ajax, cousin of Achilles. He is indeed compared to a donkey, but no discourtesy is meant. Sturdy valor is as yet, perhaps, almost as respectable as crafty trickery. To the names here mentioned every alert student of the epic will easily add a score equally well known.

Iliad, xi., 558.

The familiar spirit in which the Homeric gods are treated will certainly shock any reverent, thoughtful reader. They behave decidedly worse than the least noble men and women. The latter were drawn, in some sense, from life. Divinities Homer had not seen. To them are assigned, by him and by the older myth-makers generally, all the passions of men, with infinitely more power to gratify them, while death, the highest penalty for human misdeeds, they could not suffer. We may plead in defence, also, that many ignoble myths must be far older than Homer. The crudest tales of savage forefathers, like the unfilial mutilation of Uranos by Kronos, or the yet more horrible cannibalism of Kronos himself, who devours his own children, must have been known to the epic poet, and were quietly suppressed by him.

Yet at times the behavior of Homer's gods seems deliberately grotesque. The worst scene is perhaps in Book XXI., where many divinities play rather ignoble parts on the Trojan battle-field. Queen Hera, incensed at a rash word from Artemis, seizes both her wrists with her left hand. With the right she grasps the huntress's own bow and well-filled quiver. With this weapon

> "She smiling
> Beat her over the ears, while this way and
> that she was writhing."

Iliad, xxi., 491-92.

Presently the princess escapes heavenward and, perched upon her august father's knee, rails at her cruel step-

mother: while the wide-scattered arrows are meantime carefully gathered up again by thrifty mother Leto.

To these strictures Thetis is an exception. But it is in a human relation, not as a goddess, that she appears in the tale. Far better than Hecuba is she the incarnate ideal of motherhood, "traversing sea, earth, and heaven in her devotion, and interceding at the very Throne of Grace for suffering, wronged humanity." She, however, like all Homeric characters, is duly subordinated to the needs of the chief plot, just as sculptured figures fit into pediment, frieze, or metope, which in turn are no mere adornments, but structural features of the perfect temple.

"Art and Humanity in Homer," p. 89.

The analogy between epic and drama is often very close, Many passages of the Iliad are in dialogue form, the announcement of a new speaker, in a single verse, being hardly longer than a stage-direction. The quarrel in Book I. is perhaps the most famous scene of this kind, but the Olympian discussion just afterward is at least equally vivid, and is imitated in hardly less sportive key by Stephen Phillips in the prologue of his "Ulysses." The Embassy to Achilles in Book IX., the visit of Priam in Achilles's cabin, could well be enacted. The epic had within itself all the chief elements of the heroic drama.

The unity of the main story in the Iliad is especially praised by Aristotle, who remarks that the dramatists have been unable to carve out plots from it. He refers especially to the announced subject, the wrath of Achilles and its consequences. But the poem ended in his day, as now, with the funeral rites of Hector, at which neither wife nor mother of the dead prince utters the final words. The last lines fall to Helen, who speaks of Hector's unfailing courtesy even to her, and bewails her own doubly forlorn and lonely lot. This seems intended to recall the yet larger tragedy, in which she and

Aristotle, Poetics, 23, 24.

Paris are the original cause of woe. In an earlier scene, speaking of her paramour, she faces with dread the throught:

"Evil the destiny surely that Zeus for us twain has appointed,
Doomed to be subjects of song among men of a far generation."

Iliad, vi., 357–58.

The Iliad has no hint of a happy future for either guilty one. It seems probable that the rude but healthy morality of the earliest epic permitted no restoration to honor for her, any more than for Guinevere in the Keltic myth. The Odyssey takes a more lenient and romantic view of her life. It is perhaps already time to pass to the younger poem.

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Jebb's "Introduction to Homer" is the best small volume on the subject in English. Leaf's "Companion to the Iliad" is constantly helpful, and can be used side by side with the Macmillan translations or with a Greek text. Many topics here touched upon are discussed in the author's "Art and Humanity in Homer."

The scholarly and faithful prose translations of Iliad and Odyssey by Andrew Lang and his associates are probably now more widely used than any others. Chapman's versions, and even Pope's, must be regarded as monuments of English literature, not as Homeric. For special discussion of Pope see the author's edition of his Iliad (Globe Schoolbook Company). Bryant's and Lord Derby's renderings in blank verse are comparatively faithful. The most elaborate metrical version is by Worsley (Books I.–XII.) in Spenserean stanzas. It is much closer than would seem possible. Conington rendered Books XIII.–XXIV. in the same difficult form. Way's spirited version is in anapæstic hexameter, and rhymed. For extended experiments in hexameter see "Art and Humanity in Homer."

The speech of Sarpedon mentioned above is perhaps the finest example of Pope's spirited style. See his Iliad, Book XII., vss. 310–328.

CHAPTER IV

THE ODYSSEY

THE Odyssey is three thousand lines shorter than the companion epic. It announces in the opening verse that it sings, not an episode like the Iliad, but a hero. Throughout the twelve thousand hexameters that hero is indeed never really out of our minds. Though the plot itself only covers forty-one days, ten less than the Iliad, many events of Odysseus's previous life are recounted, chiefly in his own words, and mysterious glimpses, even, of his future are accorded us, especially on his visit to the world of the dead. This latter episode is important, as the earliest forerunner of Virgil's noblest rhapsody, and, through that, to some extent, even of Dante's cosmic vision. Despite a remarkable widening of the scene, the unity of the plot is doubtless better maintained, while the romantic episodes bring the poem closer to our sympathies than is the greater part of the Iliad.

Odyss., xi., 121-137.

The singer of the Odyssey nowhere hints a claim to the creation of the Iliad as well. Most students, as they pass from one epic to the other, feel a difference of tone and spirit too great to be explained by the change of subject. The gods, for instance, are farther away, in a heavenly abode, far beyond the reach of hail, snow, wind, or cloud, rather than on bleak, snowy Thessalian Olympos. They are less ignoble, and also less human. Pallas can inspire her favorite with wisdom, without herself darting earthward to seize him by the hair. In general the Heaven-dwellers appear rarely to men, and

Odyss., vi ,42-46.

Iliad, i., 429, 499.

Iliad, i., 194-97.

for benignant purposes :—yet, even so, they seldom depart without betraying their divinity.

Real knowledge of the Mediterranean has widened. In the Iliad we saw only the Ægean, with dim, far glimpses of Thracian nomads, of swart Ethiopians, and pygmies dwelling by Ocean's stream. "Sidonian" is there but a name for the marvels of art. The Greeks of the Odyssey know Egypt, Libya, even the Sicilians, at least as slaves and slave-buyers. The Phœnician is no mere wonder-worker now, but only too familiar as a pirate-trader. The western isle of Ithaca is the very centre of the tale. Even the seas and lands of Homeric Romance, far westward from Malea, seem drawn from some real—though distorted—accounts of Arctic or Atlantic regions. Greek commerce is beginning.

Iliad, xiii., 5; i., 423; iii., 6; vi., 289; xxiii., 743.

Odyss., iv., 351, 385; xx., 383; xv., 473.

The Iliad is an unrivalled picture of war. The central point, the Golden Mile-stone, of the Odyssey is a home. We never doubt, nor forget, that the faithful wife will behold, returning in triumph to his own, the wide-wandering and less faithful husband. The family life of Nestor, and of Menelaos, makes an effective contrast with the previous sketch of distracted Ithaca. The picture of Menelaos and Helen at home, entertaining the sons of their old friends Nestor and Odysseus, is in itself the most attractive glimpse we have of early Greek royalty and hospitality.

Odyss., iii. and iv. passim.

There are even some signs of decadence, both in life and in art. It has been said already that the sterner morality of the Iliad would hardly have restored the guilty Helen to honor, power, and serene prosperity. A similar romantic tendency permits the over-elaboration of beautiful scenes, like the Phæacian episode, whereas the domestic life of Hecuba or Andromache, and even of storm-tost Briseis, was utilized, in the elder poem, only as a masterly

foil for the more heroic battle-scenes. It is hard to quarrel with the romanticism that presents us with Nausicaa in her immortal beauty and eternal youth. Yet she undoubtedly tempts us, if she did not tempt Odysseus, to forget the impatiently waiting and sore-bestead Penelope. The younger epic is distinctly less austere.

The Odyssey maintains with skill the types of character so well known to us from the Iliad. Ajax, Agamemnon, Achilles, even in the under-world, are worthy of their earthly names. Menelaos is gentle, Nestor loquacious, boastful, yet kingly, still. But a minor character of the Iliad is now the chief hero throughout, and this more characteristically Hellenic type of shrewdness has outlived all the sturdier fighters of his generation. He survived Achilles still longer in his influence upon their historical descendants. We recognize him often, reincarnated in such heroes as Themistocles.

The poem falls easily into three unequal sections. Books I.–IV. describe the royal abode in Ithaca, now impoverished by Penelope's lawless and persistent suitors, the quest of Telemachos for his father, his visits to Pylos and Sparta; Books V.–XII. deal with Odysseus only; in Books XIII.–XXIV. father and son act together, in Ithaca.

In Book V. we for the first time clearly descry Odysseus, in Calypso's far isle of enchantment. After world-wide year-long wandering, with the loss of all his ships and crews, this luxurious repose and superhuman love were at first welcomè to his heart. But when seven years have been spent with her, human ties and memories revive, "the nymph no longer is pleasing," and Hermes comes to her with Zeus's command to speed the captive homeward. In brief time, though not without final shipwreck and deadly peril, Odysseus reaches a comparatively humane and con-

Odyss., v., 153.

Odyss., v. ad fin.

genial folk, Nausicaa's people. To them he relates his wilder adventures among ogres, sorceress, and even on a voyage to Hades. Thence he is carried, sleeping soundly, upon one of their magic barks, fleeter than the thought of man, and thus passes by an all-night voyage back to the realm of reality, to the rugged shore of his own Ithaca.

Odyss., ix.–xii.

Odyss., xiii., 76–95.

In the latter half of the poem, with yet fuller detail, not without some awkward repetitions, we hear how he comes disguised to his own distracted hall, is jeered at and maltreated, yet at last slays the suitors, and wins his kingly right again. The reunion of the royal lovers is happily utilized for a rapid review of the long and wide-ranging plot, for Odysseus relates to his wife all the adventures he has passed through from the Trojan strand to his own gate, and the poet gives—not the very words, but—a summary of the tale.

Odyss., xxiii. 306–43.

Perhaps at this point the original singer showed his final title to mastery by leaving off betimes. To be sure, some solution of the blood-feud might be demanded by the Hellenic listener, yet the XXIVth book lacks the large unity and noble ethical tone felt at the close of our present Iliad. Moreover, the feud is broken off at last merely by Pallas's theatrical appearance, *ex machina*, somewhat like the least successful of Euripidean finales. We might almost think that the epic minstrel, or his audience, showed signs of weariness at the goal.

On the whole, however, the Homeric poems offer to us a fairly consistent and most vivid picture of the heroic time, the age of feudal kings and subservient peoples. In their joyous vigor, their humane moderation, their directness and vividness, the life and the art of "Homer" are already thoroughly Hellenic. The geographical outlines, too, are as unmistakably Greek as is the very language. Yet all this is distinct, in fact remote, from the actual

life of the sixth century before Christ, on either side the Ægean. This last is the earliest historical epoch we distinctly descry, as depicted by Herodotos, who lived still a century later. The art of these poems is mature, conscious, dramatic in quality, highly idealized, dominated by healthy though simple ethical feeling, and quite unfettered by the historian's conscience.

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See the note at the close of the previous chapter.

Most of the same translators should be mentioned here. Worsley rendered the entire Odyssey in the Spenserean stanza.

CHAPTER V

HOMERIC PROBLEMS

THE Iliad and Odyssey do not profess to refer to actual or recent events. The most realistic features are the elaborate and magnificent similes; but they describe chiefly scenes or incidents that might occur anywhere, in any age. Sea-billows, waving grain-fields, prowling lions, clustering flies or bees, etc., recur with especial frequency.

The poet's creative fancy is apparently unhampered, at least in all minor details of the great myth. Probably no scholar seriously believes that either poetical plot has a close resemblance to any series of real events. But the origin and authorship of the poems themselves are quite another problem, of which some solution must be attempted.

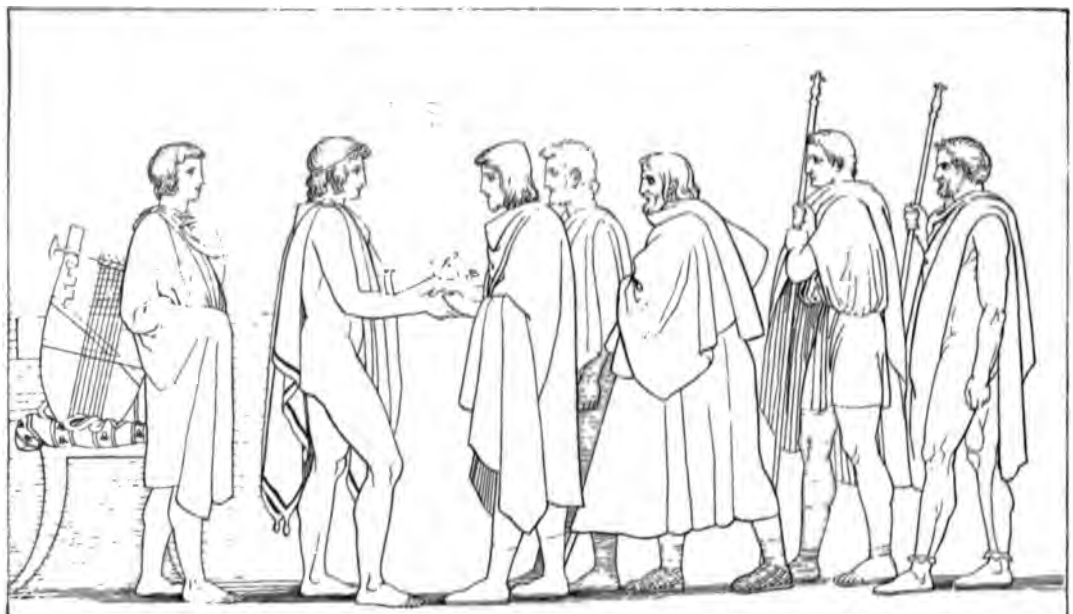
It is an alluring theory that a poem, like a myth, usually arises in the locality which it chiefly celebrates. Now the Greeks, even at that prehistoric epoch when they separated from the parent stock, or from neighbors who first gave them an impulse to growth, appear to have been advanced far above savagery. If they descended, as they probably did, from the north into Thessaly, on their slow progress toward their later homes, they doubtless brought some sort of rude lays with them.

The birthplace of the Muses was said to be Pieria, on the slopes of Thessalian Olympos. Thessaly is a fertile, open country, where settled life, accumulated wealth, and martial prowess, especially with the aid of the horse, may have been first possible. In Southern Thessaly, we are

told, were the homes of Jason and Achilles, central figures in the two chief cycles of myth. But both heroes wandered far, like their race, and even died in exile. The Muses themselves early make their abiding-place farther south, in Bœotia, on Mount Helicon, which was actually a centre of poetic activity rather late in the epic age. Indeed, the Theban myth of Oidipus looms larger, in extant Greek literature, than any other save the tale of Troy.

The first movement which seems clearly visible in authentic Greek tradition is the southward migration of the Dorian clans, the ancestors of the Spartans, Corinthians, and other Peloponnesian folk. The Greek historians set this event nearly a century after the Trojan war, and believed that the Dorians drove out the feebler descendants of those noble Achaian princes who had fought against Ilios. Such exact epochs as 1184 B.C. for the fall of Troy are, of course, worthless, but the Greeks were probably right in thus setting the descent of the Dorians at the very end of the mythic period, which is also the dawn of authentic history. Perhaps 1000 B.C. is an approximate date. These fugitive Achaian chieftains are supposed to have led the first Greek colonies to the eastern Ægean Islands and shores.

The assumption of some such series of real migrations seems necessary to account for later conditions and ancient local names. The early colonists of Asia are to be classified largely as Æolic, with an Ionian element which overshadowed them, more and more, by superior thrift and intellectual energy. These Æolic Greeks were probably the especial custodians of the lays and myths generally, which may well have had their origin in Thessaly, or even in some still older common home of the Hellenic clans. Agamemnon himself, ruler of "Argos," whether mythic or real, is believed by some scholars to have had originally



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a local habitation in Thessaly. Out of struggles of these colonists with Asiatic races may have grown the localized legend of an earlier and more national contest, *i.e.*, the siege of Troy itself. Any such transplanting of a legend is quite in accordance with our notions of myth. Agamemnon may be as unreal as Heracles, whose easier victory over the Trojans has been mentioned above. Both tales might serve to encourage real Greeks, fighting on Asian soil against "barbarians."

The historical Ægean world is roughly divisible into three zones. The Dorians hold the Peloponnesos, Crete, Rhodes, and Southeastern Asia. Ionians live in Attica, the Cyclades, and the central part of Western Asia Minor. The less homogeneous Æolic belt to the northward includes Thessaly, Bœotia, Lesbos, and parts of the Troadic peninsula. Some dialectic features, and traits of character, sufficiently distinguish each great group of clans. The Ionic speech of Attica eventually became the basis of a fairly uniform Hellenic idiom, the "common dialect" of Alexandrian and Byzantine times. Our accents, breathings, etc., were first used in writing about 300 B.C. in Egypt, to make clear to Asiatic folk the proper utterance of this later Greek.

Now, the Homeric poems, like nearly all ancient works, come to us in relatively late manuscripts, with the accepted spelling, accents, etc., of the Alexandrian scholars. They seem to have been originally composed, for the most part, in an early form of Ionic Greek, which cannot now be restored with exactness of detail. But there are also many words and forms of pure Æolic, usually in places where the Ionic word would be unmetrical. Thus *pisures* (four), beginning with a short syllable, occurs where *tessares* could not be used. There is a wide-spread belief that much of the Homeric poetry is a free translation, or recasting, by Ionic minstrels, of primitive Æolic lays.

These rather fragmentary data seem fairly reconcilable with each other. The ancient biographies of Homer are late and childish fabrications. The very word *Homēros* (hostage), though suitable enough for a proper name, gives us no ray of enlightenment. The chief fact upon which these lives of the poet are in tolerable agreement is that he was an Asiatic Greek, probably an Ionian. His various alleged birthplaces, Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis (in Rhodes), etc., perhaps mark real stages in the spread of Ionic culture. In the first two places, especially, Ionians had overflowed an older Æolic element. That Athens often stands last, in such lists, recalls the well-authenticated and nowise perplexing fact, that the free life of the colonies, and closer contact with the Oriental races, brought wealth, leisure, art, self-consciousness, to the colonial Greeks, long before Attica awoke to her high calling. That some additions to the text of the Iliad were actually made in Attica, as late as Peisistratos's time, is indicated both by the character of the passages and by the dialectic forms that occur in them.

[Peisistratos] 550 B.C.

The dialect of the Iliad and Odyssey is very copious and flexible, and clearly shows long elaboration under the influences of the hexameter. Thus five variations for the infinitive *be* are freely employed. No colloquial usage in any one land and age could float them all: but being convenient from their varying metrical lengths, the archaic forms have evidently been retained side by side with far later ones. Certain common formations of the language, especially the comparative and superlative of adjectives, appear to be modified expressly to fit the recurrent dactylic metre. Homeric Greek was shaped, as it were, in the long trough of the hexameter, and is an artificial, poetic form of expression.

The heroic verse itself is clearly an artistic invention.

It is too long to be really a single line or clause, uttered with one expiration of breath, and is formed by the union of *two* such verses as are found in the oldest Latin and German poetry.

The epics, then, are artistic products, possible only after long gradual development. We have abundant evidence of a very vigorous Hellenic culture, both philosophic and poetic, in early Ionia. There the two Homeric poems probably received essentially their final form. Herodotos, a shrewder judge in purely literary questions than in almost anything else, sets Homer "four centuries before my time," *i.e.*, about 850 before Christ. The guess is not a bad one.

Herod., II., 53.

If the Asian coast was really colonized first by Greeks from the larger peninsular home of the race, then "Homer," *i.e.*, the chief shaping artist of the Iliad, probably lived after that event, but endeavored to keep all traces of it out of his tale. Every poet mentioned in Iliad or Odyssey is a courtly minstrel attached to the person of a feudal king. Yet Homer need not have been himself such a minstrel, any more than he who described Allan-bane in "Lady of the Lake," or he who chiefly interprets to us the whole knightly world of Merlin's and Tristram's day.

Whoever that great artist was, it is certain that he borrowed, from all sources available, at least as freely as Virgil or Shakespeare. If any Æolic lays chanced to have come with him or to him from Thessaly, Bœotia, Lesbos, or the Troad, we may be sure he exploited them without scruple.

This master-composer may well have been able to write, for writing was certainly usual, even among common Greek soldiers, by the seventh century before Christ. This is proved by a curious inscription scratched on the leg of a statue at Abu Simbel in upper Egypt. Of course the records of the Egyptians themselves, and the nations of Meso-

potamia, go back many centuries farther. In a land so close to the early Hellenes as Crete has been found a form of writing assigned to the twelfth century before Christ. The alert and practical Greeks would hardly long fail to utilize a device so fruitful. But when or where they did borrow the "Phœnician signs" of the alphabet cannot as yet be safely conjectured.

There is no knowledge of writing indicated in the Iliad. The "many baneful symbols" of Bellerophon's sealed tablet are pretty clearly rude picture-tokens of deadly ill-will, multiplied for fear they will not be understood. Yet this very ignorance, like the use of barter, and valuation in oxen instead of money, may again be mere archaic "local coloring": in other words, poets themselves familiar with letters and money might depict a ruder age ignorant of both.

Iliad, vi., 168–69.

Certainly there was no protection of authorship by anything like copyright. Written books would be at best very costly and correspondingly rare. The epic poetry is so full of color, movement, and vigor, that it is clearly intended to be heard, as recited, not conned in the closet. This condition, indeed, the only normal one for enjoying literature, continued among the Greeks at least down to the time of Plato, who in his "Ion" gives a glowing account of the rhapsode's performance and the effect upon his audience.

These conditions all aided the tendency to work out episodes in these most famous poems, to introduce local or personal allusions, in general to tamper freely with the text: a process which went on for centuries after its real composition. Unlike Dante's interwoven rhymes, the hexameter leaves the poem exposed at any point to such an interpolation, by anyone able to compose a passable archaic verse in the most familiar of all metres.

The views here set forth are approximately those upon which scholars are tending toward agreement. The anal-

ogy to the building of a Gothic cathedral is a trite one. In each case a whole race labors, many forgotten artists have built their lives into the masterpiece, and one, not necessarily he who laid the corner-stone, deserves the chief credit; yet long after his time the good or bad taste of later ages may add to or deface numberless minor portions, or even gravely disfigure the general effect.

When we come to details there is endless disagreement; nay, even the same analyst, be it Jebb, or Leaf, or the most learned of the Germans, will never carve up the text twice alike. The present writer believes in an Asiatic Homer, decidedly loyal to his own land, accounting Sarpedon, Æneas, Hector, Priam, among its chief traditional treasures: indeed, local pride may have aided the preservation of the Trojan lay in particular, while countless other "Homeric" epics vanished forever. He seems to have enlarged an Achilleid to a real Iliad, too broad in scope for the subject as announced in the prologue. The famous dialogue between Hector and Andromache is his master-stroke, unless we except the final scene in Achilles's cabin. The pathos of Troy's destruction appeals to him far more than the guilt or punishment of Helen and Paris. Indeed, Hector's fall, rather than Achilles's triumph, is the striking culmination. Hence this splendid scene of parting, which brings before us the most pathetic family group in ancient literature.

But a later meddler has literally run in a rude wall which obscures the chief façade of the temple! In Book VII. the Greeks grant a truce for burying the dead, and abuse its conditions to build a continuous fortification, with towers and moat, about their fleet. This action is needless and improbable, for even without Achilles they have won the honors of the fight. This wall is oftener ignored than remembered in later passages of the long epic. Worst of all, the episode takes up two whole days, and the

two nights Hector spends peaceably under his own roof. So all Andromache's fears and tears are wasted—and a few days later Hector goes forth to an unforeseen and unheralded death! Such a wall has deservedly found few defenders among critics of the text. Surely the parting was intended to be final, the agony of Andromache a prophecy swiftly fulfilled. Indeed this whole seventh book, with its ineffective duel, is a feeble episode.

Il., vii., 310, and 476–77.

To other carpers other flaws may appear. Even Andrew Lang, the chief defender of unity in authorship, concedes a few interpolations. After loving perusal of the poem as a whole, every reader may, if he will, play the critic in detail. It is not a fruitless task: but full agreement, like full knowledge, is impossible.

The analysis of the Odyssey is both easier and less interesting. The three evident subdivisions of the plot have been already pointed out. Either may have been treated first as a whole, though the quest of Telemachos for his missing father, the least interesting of the three, seems rather, in the main, a Prologue, from a later and feebler hand. Many lines appear to be borrowed into it from the older portion of the poem which follows, where they fit better into their connection.

As a whole the Odyssey seems later than the Iliad. Especially the dignity of the gods, and the remoteness of their abode, would appear to be the conception of a more philosophic age. The light and sportive tone in which the Phæacian life is described is quite unlike anything in the austerer Trojan epic. The treatment of Helen, as was said, appears less severely ethical.

These differences grow upon the student on repeated perusal of both poems. Yet they are not by any means decisive. There is a far greater diversity, for instance,

between Tennyson's "Princess," or even the Arthurian "Idyls," and the group of historical dramas composed in his last decades. Despite all their minor differences there is a real and deep similarity between the two great Greek epics. They are, as it were, parts of one large and vivid picture. It is a picture, however, which remains fragmentary and isolated. Above all, it is so idealized by artistic genius that we should never desire to fetter it, at any important point, to a prosaic or historical reality.

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A far more complete and confident defence for the essential unity of Homeric authorship will be found in Lang's "Homer and the Epic." On the other hand, Von Christ, Jebb, Leaf, assign each passage or line to the original poem, or to a particular supplement, with surprising confidence. The appendices to Ameis's German edition of Homer are packed with hundreds of detailed and discordant hypotheses as to the authorship of each passage or line. Indeed, the discussion has grown utterly incoherent in its complexity.

All archæological questions affecting the "Homeric problem" are given exhaustive treatment in the scholarly German work on Troy by Dr. Dörpfeld and his coadjutors, which has just appeared. Dr. Schliemann's own books are now almost wholly superseded.

CHAPTER VI

THE DACTYLIC HEXAMETER

THE sonorous effect of ancient Greek verse, even as read by ourselves, cannot be effectively imitated in any modern speech. From our imperfect knowledge, we judge that a real Homeric recitation would seem to us like singing, or at least intoning. In English there is much monotony of pitch, while in each longer word one syllable has a strong fixed stress. This stress, or accent, is the chief feature of English or German utterance. Even poetry cannot safely ignore or displace it. Longfellow, by a few more lines like

> "And the skipper has taken his little daughtér to bear
> him companý,"

would have spoiled his best ballad.

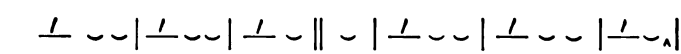
If any stress fell upon a particular syllable of a Greek word, it was so slight that it could be ignored by the poet. Our Greek texts do, indeed, have accents on nearly every word : but these merely represent a musical note, higher than the ordinary, upon which the syllable so marked should be uttered. Any trained speaker uses at least one such note, to vary and relieve his usual tone. These accents, it has been remarked, were devised about 300 B.C., to show to foreigners the cadences then used by Greeks. Early texts, even of Homeric poems, are now, unfortunately, written with the same accents, but we have very little idea how the prehistoric Greeks actually spoke.

As to Homeric verse, we really know only the rhythm.

Each line is a series of six bars in $\frac{4}{8}$ time. Every syllable is either long—a quarter note—or short, *i.e.*, an eighth. The ancient Greeks, in every age, are supposed to have felt this accurate distinction of time, and all their metres are based solely thereon. In the hexameter the first note in each bar is always long. The second half-bar may be also one long syllable, but it is oftener composed of two short ones, except in the last foot. This unvaried dissyllabic sixth foot marks clearly the close of the measure, which is really a two-line stanza of three bars each. The first line of the Odyssey may be timed thus :



or, as usually recorded,



The necessary pause for breath after *Mousa* doubtless marks the old division into two lines, and is called the cæsura. Any modern musician will naturally throw a stress on the first note of each bar. Our English verse must arrange the verse to permit this emphasis. Thus :

" Bént but not | bróken | by | ágе | was the | fórm of the | nótary | públic | "

Some scholars deny that the ancient music or poetry required even this recurrent stress. They urge that the unvarying long note marked sufficiently the beginning of the feet. To most of us some form of recurrent emphasis seems the essence of rhythm itself.

This metre is a very swift one, and demands many light syllables which can be rapidly uttered. Latin hexameters

are somewhat heavy. In German or English the movement is generally rather slow. All these languages are loaded, much more than Greek, with consonant-sounds. Thus the verse quoted from the opening of the Odyssey may be fairly paraphrased:

"Sing to me, Muse, of the man of the many devices who wandered."

Here are twenty-five or -six closed sounds, to seventeen vowels. The Greek verse had the same number of open sounds, and only twenty-one consonants, all but eight of them liquids. Even that is a remarkably large number. Iliad I., 1, has only *eleven* consonants, five of them liquids:

Mēnin a- | éide the | -á | Pe | -lēĭa | -dᵹó Achi | -léos | .

Not even a nonsense-verse can be put together out of English words, containing so few.

Greek and even Latin poetry can conform to the rather arbitrary rule, that any two consonant-sounds following a vowel shall be considered as making that syllable long. If enforced in English, such a rule makes dactylic verse—not difficult but—impossible, save for very short and elaborate lyric strains.

But that statement as to quantity is not true in English. Scott's "Young Lochinvar," for instance, an excellent and much-praised metrical experiment, ignores any such canon in its every line. We have, indeed, a rather vague consciousness that some English syllables are longer than others. Generally speaking, accented syllables, including emphatic words of one syllable, are long, those immediately before or after are short. Occasional exceptions, like wĭdōw, are noticeably ill-fitted for our verse.

Mr. Longfellow had not so sensitive an ear for quantity

as, *e.g.*, Coleridge, Swinburne, or Poe. Many of his hexameters offend even the unclassical reader. Thus in

> "Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf
> of the ocean"

we hear a slightly false note. But it is not at *in* or *of*. Both violate the Greek law just mentioned, yet both are truly short, in our speech, because unemphatic. The trouble is with *like*, which is too long for its present position, since it contains a double or diphthongal vowel, *i.e.*, *laīk*. The substitution of *as* enables the verse to run at full speed. A grosser metrical blemish is *stands* in

> "Still stands the forest primeval."

Here *four* successive consonants make the syllable heavy indeed.

At best this movement is not easy. The normal clause or sentence in English, in German, even in Attic Greek, is iambic in rhythm, beginning usually with an article, preposition, conjunction, or other unstressed monosyllabic word. To accent this is absurd. The worst couplet in the famous Psalm of Life is:

> "Fór the soul is dead that slumbers,
> Aṅd things are not what they seem."

Yet the dactylic measure is for us not by any means unattainable, and is certainly a great favorite. The metre aided the lasting popularity of "Evangeline," the best-beloved work of our most widely read poet.

The final translation of Homer has hardly yet appeared. Rhyme is too difficult, in our language, to be sustained through an epic. At any rate, our own age demands a closer faithfulness to the original than the couplet of Pope, or Worsley's skilful use of the Spenserean stanza, could

ever attain. The line, or verse, as the natural unit of measure for the thought and expression, should be retained. The only dignified unrhymed English verse long enough to match Homer's line is the "accentual hexameter." Until a great master of metre like Mr. Swinburne has exhausted the possibilities of dactylic rhythm, this last of our Homeric problems will remain unsolved. Difficulties hardly less great were triumphantly overcome by the German poet Voss, whose last-century versions of both Iliad and Odyssey are most acceptable to his compatriots. At present most English readers prefer the prose experiments of Mr. Palmer, or of Mr. Lang and his friends, because, unhampered by fixed metrical laws, they can at least make a close approach to the clear flow of the original narrative.

CHAPTER VII

THE EPIC CYCLE

We have no fragment of Greek poetry older than the Iliad. Prose there was none, if we except pithy proverbs and similar dateless folk-lore. The best ancient critics were aware that they were no better off than we. Thus Herodotos remarks: "The poets said to have lived earlier than Homer and Hesiod were, it seems to me, born later." With this we must dismiss Orpheus, Mousaios, and various other semi-mythical figures. The later fabrications made in their names will not come within the range of this book.

Herod., II., 53.

There is extant a mass of verse, distinctly younger than the larger part of the two great epics, yet closely akin to them in dialect, essentially identical in metre, and fairly to be described as "Homeric," *i.e.*, of the same school and traditions as the older and more famous poems. We refer especially to the Hymns, the Hesiodic poems, and the "Epic Cycle." The ancients credited much of this verse also to an individual Homer, the supposed author of Iliad and Odyssey. Of course, all we have now is but a scanty gleaning from the fair harvest which once filled each dale or island of Hellas with music and song.

Especially as to the epic cycle, we are reduced to meagre fragments, and a prose summary by a very late hand. This editor, Proclos, probably not the mystical neo-Platonic philosopher of that name, gives the impression that this entire group of epics may have been largely composed for the very purpose of forming a complete cycle or hand-book of mythology. But the odd numbers of books mentioned,

the irrational points at which the various authors are said to begin and end, betray the fact that ancient poems, more or less discordant and overlapping, had been trimmed to fit into this too accurate system.

First, a Theogonia and a Titanomachia, perhaps really connected, told the tales of purely divine action, beginning with the wedlock of Uranos and Ge. In the second volume must have appeared Prometheus, perhaps also newly created man.

The Theban section, though not expressly included by Proclos, must have followed. Three poems, 20,000 hexameters altogether, related the great legend of Oidipus's parents, the hero himself, and his unhappy offspring. These epics appear to have furnished suggestions for the plots of many masterpieces in Attic drama. A single quotation, touching a detail not elsewhere recorded, will indicate how great are the gaps in our tradition.

"Yet the divinely descended hero, the fair Polyneikes,
First at Oidipus's side made ready the beautiful table,
Silvern, of Cadmos wise as the gods, and straightway upon it
Poured for him sweet wine, in a golden beautiful goblet.
Yet when he perceived at his side that cup of his father,
Precious, in reverence held, great woe came over his spirit.
Instantly then upon both his sons he uttered his curses
Never to be escaped, and the wrath of the gods was awakened—
Wishing that they might never in amity share their possessions:
Ever between them twain might strife and battle continue."

Kinkel's Fragmenta Epicorum, p. 11.

That Oidipus cursed his sons for ingratitude, and for their neglect of his helpless age, is familiar to all. The ill-timed use of the beaker, the Theban "luck of Edenhall," seems an insufficient grievance; but the context is lost,

doubtless forever. We get here only a tantalizing glimpse of a tale, and an art in its telling, nowise unworthy of the Homeric name. As to the last of these three epics, the Epigonoi, or "Posterity," Herodotos merely utters, in passing, a bold doubt of its Homeric authorship. So there was no definite tradition as to a separate school of Theban poets in this connection.

Herod., iv., 32.

We pass to the Trojan section of the cycle, and to the most interesting of the lost poems, the "Cyprian Epic." Cyprus-born Aphrodite is its chief figure, and the same island may well have bred the singer also. Its evident purpose is to create an adequate introduction to the Iliad, in its larger character as a general picture of the great war. The opening verses are preserved, and may remind us faintly of Noah's time.

"Once on a time was Earth by the races of men made weary,
Who were wandering numberless over the breadth of her bosom.
Zeus with pity beheld it, and took in his wise heart counsel
How to relieve of her burden the Earth, life-giver to all things,
Fanning to flame that terrible struggle, the war upon Troia.
So should the burden by death be removed, and they in the Troad
Perished—the heroes; the counsel of Zeus was brought to fulfilment.

Fragments, pp. 20-21.

The allusion to the fulfilment of Zeus's counsel seems, from the prose summary, to have been repeated at the close of the poem. It occurs in these very words at the fifth line of the Iliad, from which it is here borrowed as a refrain. The fragments give us only glimpses of

"Aphrodite delighting in laughter, among her attendants,"

for instance as she passes, we know not whither,

"Sweetly singing, adown Mount Ida abounding in fountains,"

or as

"Out of the odorous blossoms of earth she is plaiting her garlands."

This poet doubtless first recorded, possibly invented, certain features that now seem essential to the Helen myth, or tale of Troy. They all begin somewhat thus:

"Thetis, loveliest of goddesses, was wooed even by Zeus. But an oracle predicted for her a son mightier than his sire. All the gods attended her reluctant wedding to the mortal Peleus. (Here are to be shown the quaint processional figures of the François vase.) Eris, or strife, only, was uninvited, but threw in the apple of discord 'for the fairest.' The chief goddesses claim it: the decision is left to the Trojan shepherd Paris. Aphrodite, outbidding Hera and Athene, wins the prize, promising Paris the most beautiful of mortal women."

But to all this there is in the Iliad but one faint and awkward allusion. That couplet breaks the connection where it stands, and is without question an interpolation, out of the Cypria, or from some similar poem now quite forgotten.

This epic, we are told, was in *eleven* books, and exactly pieced on to the beginning of Homer's tale. But these divisions themselves were made in Alexandria, for convenience in copying and making up of rolls. Eleven is an irregular number. Even so late, there was probably a twelfth book, which may have been cut off in Proclos's time because it overlapped the Iliad.

Herod., ii., 117. Herodotos says that this poem is not by Homer, because it brings Paris and Helen direct to Troy, omitting their long voyage as far as Sidon, mentioned in the Iliad. This omission had been corrected in Proclos's day, as we see

Fragmenta, p. 18.



GODS DESCENDING TO AID THE TROJANS. ILIAD XX.

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clearly from his summary: but enough discrepancies between Cypria and Iliad remain to prove an independent origin. The ancients had a silly story that Homer wrote the Cypria, but gave it as his daughter's dower to her husband, to be declaimed as his own. This is plainly an attempt to reconcile two theories or traditions of authorship, Asiatic and Cyprian. Incidentally it gives us a hint how mercenary and unscrupulous the rhapsodes, or roving reciters, were thought to be. That the professional elocutionist should have any real kinship with the inspired poet whom he exploits is no more necessary for Homeric days than for our own.

Next came the Iliad. To it there were at least two supplements, The Aithiopis and the Little Iliad. Each doubtless described the rest of the war, down to the fall of the city. From these poems Proclos, or his authority, culled the best or most popular portions for a single connected narrative. These supplements to the Iliad are evidently the chief sources of Virgil, especially in Æneid, Book II.

A separate poem, "Nostoi," or "Homeward Voyages," described the later fortunes of the Grecian victors other than Odysseus. Large fragments of this epic may be imbedded in the Odyssey as we now read it. Especially, Nestor's reminiscences, and Menelaos's account of his brother's voyage and his own, occur in the "Telemachia"; a section of the Odyssey which is, on many grounds, accounted a late and unoriginal composition.

Odys., iii., iv.

Latest in subject, apparently also in merit and age, the "Telegonia" is barely worthy of mention. It may be said to dispose of Odysseus's widows and orphans, since his two sons, by Penelope and by the wicked enchantress Circe, marry each the other's mother. Certainly, epic inspiration was running low. The heroic age must be considered

as closing with the generation that fought in the Scamander's plain. Telemachos and his contemporaries are commonplace mortals at best.

All these Trojan poems of the Cycle once seemed firmly encrusted upon the two immortal epics. Thus some ancient copies of the Iliad ended not :

> "So they made ready a grave for Hector the tamer of horses,"

but instead :

> "So they made ready a grave for Hector : the Amazon straightway
> Came, who was daughter to Ares, impetuous urger of horses."

This prepared the reader directly for the famous supplement, the Aithiopis of Arctinos. This author is said to have lived in Miletos, about the beginning of the Olympiads. If so, the Iliad was at least completed, and famous, in its present form, early in the eighth century before Christ.

776 B.C.

This feeling that the Iliad closes prematurely, and that it should culminate with the thrice-prophesied death of Achilles, is a curiously strong and persistent one. The closing book of the Odyssey begins with a brief attempt to fill this gap. Virgil's second book has been mentioned above. Goethe, as well as the Roman Statius, began an Achilleis in hexameters, though it remained but a fragment. But Arctinos's work is perished and forgotten, like that of Byzantine and Mahometan builders who pieced out the Parthenon : the Iliad remains.

Many other early epics are known to us by name or little more. No date can be assigned to them. More than one, naturally, celebrated exploits of Heracles. Nearly all were ascribed to Homer. His early fame, finally, is attested by

parodies in the epic manner. The most famous of these, the Margites, lives only in the characterization of its hero:

"Every art he practised, and every one of them badly."

The "Batrachomyomachia," *i.e.*, "Frog and Mouse Contest," is extant as a fragment of a few hundred hexameters, and may still be enjoyed as a burlesque on the grand style of the Homeric battle-pieces. The debate on Olympos is especially audacious, mimicking the ignoble and selfish motives of Homer's gods. Pallas Athene declares: "Oh, father, never would I go as a helper to the mice in their distress, since many evils unto me they wrought, ruining my fillets and olive-oil lamps. And this they did, that pained too much my soul. They gnawed the rope which toilfully I wrought with delicate woof, spinning the slender threads, and holes they made therein."

The allusions in this little poem to writing, and to the domestic hen, bring it down to a relatively late age, perhaps 500 B.C. Like every parody, it indicates an audience already familiar with the style and subject thus burlesqued.

The songs for potter and beggar, undignified riddles in verse, and other trifles once charged to Homer, only serve to reveal the worthlessness of the biographies wherein they are quoted.

It is a bold but alluring suggestion, that Homēros may be a merely mythical ancestor invented for the Homeridæ: and that the latter, undoubtedly a genuine Chian guild in historical times, may be by origin "The children of the Hostages." Such persons, being naturally exempt from military service, as of questionable loyalty, might well be masters of a more peaceful art. So too the blindness of Homer, as of his Thamyris in the Iliad and Demodocos in the Odyssey, may be dim reminders of an age, when only the man physically helpless could exchange the bow or lance

for the lyre. That the gods give spiritual vision in atonement for the loss of eyesight might be a later refinement.

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For this and the next three sections, see the fuller treatment, with copious translations, in the author's "Successors of Homer" (Macmillan). The meagre fragments are gathered up in a small and inexpensive book by Kinkel, "Fragmenta Epicorum Græcorum" (Teubner). They can be studied with profit only in the original Greek.



CHAPTER VIII

THE HOMERIC HYMNS

UNDER this name has come down to us a rather miscellaneous collection of hexameter poems, chiefly in the epic dialect. They vary in length from five hundred and eighty lines down to three. The first is one of the longest, and perhaps the oldest. It may fairly be called a hymn. Indeed "hymnos" has no rigid religious association in early Greek, or even so late as Pindar's time: and in truth the line between sacred and secular subjects is hard to hold, in a world of art where every hero is a demigod, and the divinities are fearlessly if not irreverently drawn with every human frailty. The Apollo hymn opens thus:

"I will remember and not be forgetful of archer Apollo,
Who by the gods is dreaded within Zeus' halls as he enters.
Straightway all to their feet leap up, as he nearer approaches,
Out of their seats, so soon as his shining weapons he levels."

This beginning is already extravagant, and seems suited only to some festal day or spot whereon Phoibos alone is adored, almost as the supreme god. After allusion to his wide-spread worship, we pass to the tale of his birth on little Delos, a floating island, which the mighty infant at once anchored. Leto, the mother, had already promised the awestruck Delos—be she nymph, island or both—

Vss. 87-88. "Verily here shall abide the enclosure and altar of Phoibos
Ever, and thee shall he hold above all others in honor."

This vow has been fulfilled, says the singer.

Vss. 146–49. "More than in all, oh Phoibos, thy heart is in Delos delighted,
Where in their trailing robes unto thee the Ionians gather,
They themselves, and their modest wives as well, and the children.
There they do honor to thee with boxing, dancing, and singing."

We note how peculiarly pious is every form of manly rivalry. So the national horse-race was the chief inspiration for the most reverent of bards, Pindar. A cock-fight is carved on the chief seat of honor in the Athenian theatre, itself the central sanctuary of the most popular god. The local allusions grow still clearer.

Vss. 150–55. "So they take their delight, whenever the games are appointed.
One would believe them to be immortal and ageless forever,
Whoso met them, when the Ionians gather together.
Then he the charm of them all would behold, and delight in their spirit,
Seeing the men of the race, and the women gracefully girdled.
Fleet are the vessels they bring as well, and many the treasures."

But a greater surprise follows. The singer turns directly to the Delian maids.

Vss. 166–73. "Greeting unto you all: and be ye of me hereafter
Mindful, when some other of men that on earth have abiding
Hither may come, as a wayworn stranger, and ask you the question:
'Oh, ye maidens, and who for you is the sweetest of minstrels,
Whoso hither have come, in whom ye most are delighted?'
Then do ye all, I pray, with one voice answer and tell him,

'Blind is the man, and in Chios abounding in crags is his dwelling.
He it is whose songs shall be supreme in the future.' "

This passage, and a tradition as to a Chian family of Homeridai, rhapsodes claiming descent from the poet, may help to account for the favorite belief in Homer as

"The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle."

But the self-effacement of the elder epic poet in his Iliad is far indeed from this complacent claim to supremacy and immortal fame.

Furthermore, this is no courtly singer before a monarch's throne. Here we behold the gathering, the sports, the prayers, of a free, roving, prosperous race, doubtless a trading sea-folk; in fact, a picture, not of the Homeric, but of the later historical Hellenic life, in and about the Ægean.

Yet this very passage is quoted in full faith as Homeric, in the fifth century before Christ, by the most accurate and cautious of the historians, Thukydides. We give it here so fully, partly to emphasize the hopeless nature of the attempt to win any glimpse whatsoever of a personal Homer: partly to show how wide a diversity in age and real poetic spirit may be veiled beneath the dialect and rhythm of the epic tradition.

The Delian hymn, or the Delian section of the long hymn, presently closes. It is noticeable that Thukydides quotes some of these lines from "the *prelude* to Apollo," and this Delian passage, though rather long, could be used, on occasion, as an introduction to some epic recitation of more general character. Such preludes, "proöimia," rather than hymns in our sense, this collection seems to contain.

Thukyd., III., 104.

The sudden transition,

"Glorious Leto's son fares, harping, to Pytho the rocky,"

Vs. 182.

is generally regarded as the beginning of a new poem, to Apollo as the Delphic god. With feebler inspiration, and some rude digressions, this subject is maintained to the end. Indeed, several briefer poems, invocations of Apollo, Leto, etc., seem to be taken up, with only moderate skill, into the main theme. Such a composite ritual, however inartistic when forced into this formal unity, has an especial value, as the earliest mass of traditions concerning Apollo's worship. To be sure, it shows plainly that the early Greeks really knew nothing as to the origin of Phoibos Apollo's most famous oracle and temple.

This divine intercessor, the son of the supreme god, who makes clear to men the will of the Fates themselves, is the most lofty conception of the myth-making age, the truest type of the Greek man himself, with his fearless open-eyed interest in all forces and beings, human or divine.

The other hymns must be more briefly mentioned. The Hermes hymn is even longer—five hundred and eighty verses—more corrupt in text, and very loose in connection at some points. It is clearly an attempt to gather up all the chief myths concerning this favorite companion of mortals. Little indeed of awe or reverence is here discernible. He is sprung from Zeus's lawless love for the shy nymph Maia, after whom our moon of spring-time is named.

Vss. 13-14. "Many the wiles of the child she bare, and crafty his counsels;
Lover of booty, a lifter of cattle, a leader of raiders."

Born at dawn, by noon he has despoiled the tortoise of its shell and invented the lyre; at nightfall he robs imperial Apollo of his kine. There is little local color in this song of the most homeless of gods.

"Freely among all mortal men or immortals he mingles.
Vss. 577-78. Rare is the good that he works, but out of all limit his mischief."

This conclusion is followed only by the couplet, easily detached, which stamps the whole as a Prelude:

Vs. 579-80. "Unto thee also greeting, O child of Zeus and of Maia:
Yet I of thee not alone, but of other song will be mindful."

This poem has been happily recast in English by Shelley. His flowing rhymed version is well known.

The Aphrodite hymn was composed by a true poet, fond of nature, familiar with Mount Ida, and extremely familiar with the Homeric epics, which he constantly echoes. The detailed story of the goddess's reluctant union with the sturdy young herdsman Anchises shocks all our notions of reverence, and even of draped reserve in art. Though the goddess is invoked at the beginning, and the usual couplet added at the end as if it were a true prelude, the poem may well be a secular lay, in honor of the later royal line in the Troad claiming descent from Æneas. This brings it into close connection with Poseidon's speech in the Iliad, prophesying the royal power of Æneas's posterity, which is perhaps a rather late addition to the epic.

Supra, p. 18.

Iliad, xx., 307-8.

Aphrodite, escaping heavenward, prophesies Æneas's birth, and adds, that this child

Vss. 258-73. "Deep-bosomed mountain nymphs shall rear for me,
Who dwell upon the great and holy mount,
Who neither count with men nor deathless gods.
Long life is theirs, ambrosial food they eat,
And with the immortals join the glorious dance.

Silenî, and the keen-eyed Argus-slayer
Mate with them in the gloom of lovely grots.
When they were born, high-crested oaks or pines
Grew with them on the all-supporting earth,
Beautiful, vigorous. On lofty heights
Precipitous they stand. The gods' demesne
Men call it, and the axe molests them not.
But when the doom of death approaches them,
First on the earth the stately trees decay,
Their bark is wasted, and their branches fall,
And the nymphs' soul as well the sunshine leaves."

This is the first clear mention of the Hamadryad, the nymph who lives, and perishes, with the single tree of which she is the humanized spirit. Superhuman, long-lived, yet subject to death, she is a novel link between mortals and immortal beings, perhaps a lovely type of decadent faith.

The fourth and most perfect of the long hymns is addressed to "Royal Demeter, our Bountiful Lady, the Giver of Spring-time." It is wholly devoted to the beautiful tale of Persephone and the Mourning Mother. The local relation to Eleusis is avowed, and once or twice the direct explanation of a later rite, from an incident of the myth itself, gives the poem a hieratic tone.

Vss. 206–11. "Then Metaneira proffered her honey-sweet wine in a goblet,
Filling it: yet she her head tossed back in refusal, declaring,
This was forbidden for her, to quaff of the wine; but she bade her
Barley and water to give her, commingled with soft penny-royal.
She made ready and offered the goddess the draught she had ordered.
—Still is the gift she accepted the portion of reverend Deo."

The Mysteries of Eleusis, and the extent to which such doctrines as the resurrection and immortal life of man were taught there by parable or drama, are subjects too large and dubious to discuss here. Some beautiful reliefs, found in Attica, give us a sense of pure and lofty dignity in the local cult. But the noblest monument of Demeter's vanished worship is this hymn, rescued as by a miracle from oblivion. Our single tattered copy was discovered, in filth and neglect, at Moscow in the eighteenth century.

These four poems make up three-fourths of the entire roll. The other twenty-nine numbers deal, at most, each with a single mythic episode. Thus the Hymn to Dionysos, in swift hexameters, describes his kidnapping by pirates, who are plagued by strange miracles upon their vessel, and finally themselves turned into dolphins. The tone is merry, yet respectful, as befits the mighty god of wine, of the vine, of the vitality in nature generally. An interesting little structure near the Dionysiac theatre, the choragic monument of Lysicrates, preserves in its tiny frieze a plastic rendering of the same myth. Dionysos in Homer is so ignoble, so unimportant, so unconnected even with wine, that we may fairly call this charming poem the starting-point for all discussion of the Attic divinity, and of the great poetic movement which he inspired.

Hymns, vi.

The minimum of the prelude form is touched in this hymn, a mere trio of lines, two of them borrowed from the real Demeter hymn :

Hymns, xii.

"First Demeter I sing, the fair-tressed reverend goddess,
Her and her daughter as well, most beautiful Persephoneia,
Hail, O goddess, protect this town : and begin our singing."

We may see a special fitness of proem to performance if a poet about to recite, *e.g.*, the sixth Iliad, where Pallas sternly ignores the processions and prayers of the Trojan dames, should begin :

Hymns, x.

"Pallas Athene first will I sing, the preserver of cities,
Terrible, who to the works of war is with Ares devoted—
Cities falling in ruins, the shouting and tumult of battle.
She, too, saveth the host, when issuing forth or returning.
Greeting, O goddess, to thee! Prosperity grant me, and fortune."

It is curious that only one proëmium, of four lines, is addressed to the king of the gods, though Pindar remarks especially that

Hymns, xxii.

Pindar Nemean Odes, ii., 3.

"The Homeridæ,
Minstrels of well-joined verse,
Begin most often with a prelude unto Zeus."

It is encouraging to see some signs of renewed interest in this neglected little volume of early Greek verse. One brief poem in it seems clearly Hesiodic, one or two are very late, but most were doubtless composed by 600 B.C. and may fairly be counted as a part of the later Homeric school.

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See the note at the end of the last chapter. There are good versions by Andrew Lang (Longmans) and by Edgar. The former has valuable notes and essays. Shelley rendered freely not only the Hymn to Hermes (Mercury), but six shorter pieces. The characteristic study of Walter Pater on the Demeter hymn, in his volume of "Greek Studies," is perhaps rather a rhapsody than a prose paraphrase.



CHAPTER IX

HESIOD

THE WORKS AND DAYS

THE metre of this poem is again the hexameter. Though slightly colored by homelier words, the dialect is still nearly Homeric. Furthermore, distinct echoes of the epic are often to be heard. We have apparently before us a rather late and partly prosaic production of the same great school as the Iliad. If the early Hellenic lays were really carried by the eastward colonists to Asia, there to be developed into the epic masterpieces, then the Hesiodic poetry may be regarded as a later reflex current, coming from the colonies to enliven the ruder, more backward motherland. We may share the very general doubt as to a real Homer: but the man Hesiod is too plainly delineated in the poem itself to be calmly dismissed as mythical.

From Kymé, a neighbor of Troy, and heir to its myths, Kymé, mother city of the more famous Cumæ in Italy, Hesiod's parents migrated, we are told, shortly before or after his birth, to Ascra, an unlovely or at least unloved village under the shadow of Bœotian Helicon. In the Homeric legend, Thebes, Orchomenos, and the neighboring shrine of Delphi, are great centres of wealth. But the singer of the Works and Days seems unaware of any such splendid tradition, knowing only the toilsome life of a peasant, between a clouded sky and a thankless soil. His brother, Perses, bribing the judges of probate, has cheated the poet of nearly his whole birthright, squandered

it, and, apparently, applied again for aid to his gifted kinsman, who bestows on him only caustic advice, and rather pessimistic views of heaven and earth.

Some scholars refuse to see any true autobiographic touches in the poem. The Ascræan farmer is to them a mere pastoral figure, like the tuneful shepherd of Theocritos's or Virgil's Bucolics. At least we have, in this and the other Hesiodic poems, evidence of a Bœotian or Heliconian school, somewhat remote from the Asiatic sources of culture. The real connection between the two centres is perhaps best seen in the Homeric "Catalogue of Ships," which gives Bœotia the first place in its lists, is not always reconcilable with the rest of the epic, and in general may well be of Heliconian origin. Yet it must have been composed for insertion in some great Trojan lay, near akin at least to our Iliad.

Whether the eight hundred and twenty-eight verses in our manuscripts form a single poem at all may be debated. Even to summarize it connectedly is no easy task. We have first a prayer to the "Muses from Pieria"—not Helicon—to sing in Zeus's honor. This form of prelude is most orthodox, but hardly seems Bœotian. Then the nobler and ignobler forms of strife, viz., emulation and envy, are laboriously distinguished. A famous and oft-quoted couplet runs :

Vss. 25-26.

"Even the potter is wroth at a potter, and craftsman at craftsman :
Even a beggar begrudges a beggar, the singer the singer."

The direct admonitions to Perses which follow soon pass, through complaints over the grudging spirit of the gods, to its explanation, viz., the sin of Prometheus. Zeus's wrath at this divine champion has compelled man ever since to earn in the sweat of his forehead a scanty

subsistence. Pandora is the most prominent figure of the tale, and the source of all our woes.

The next link is frankly made a loose one :

Vss. 106-8. "Now, if you please, I will tell you another story, in outline,
Well and skilfully,—you, meantime, in memory hold it,—
How from the self-same source spring gods, and men who are mortal."

This new tale is of the five races who have dwelt on earth, each better than the succeeding folk—with a single exception. The Pandora-myth is very hard to fit at any point into this equally disconsolate picture of the past. The whole looks like an interpolated passage, perhaps a complete poem in itself. After the golden, silvern, and bronze ages, but before his own "iron time," the singer makes space for the demigods and heroes. He mentions especially the march against Thebes, and the siege of Troy, as their two chief exploits. Here again we hear, at least for the moment, the voice of a loyal Homerid.

But the heroic days are over. Toil, and stern justice, alone remain for men. General maxims of economy presently glide into definite precepts for farmers. Perhaps verses 368–617 may be specified as the core from which our poem takes its name. But a series of rustic tasks, and maxims as to their performance, can be neither unified nor highly imaginative. Still, the prosaic wisdom of "For spring ploughing, choose a wet week," is thus glorified :

Vss. 485-90. "This shall the remedy be, if thou art belated in ploughing.
When in the leaves of the oak is heard the voice of the cuckoo
First, that across the unbounded earth brings pleasure to mortals,
Three long days let Zeus pour down his rain without ceasing,

So that it fill up an oxhoof's print, yet not overflows it.
Then may the ploughman belated be equal to him that was timely."

The oxhoof is a bit of accurate eyesight worthy of a Thoreau. Of course into so loose-jointed a passage any copyist may easily introduce an alien line. One verse, or more, may even creep in by accident from the margin, where it has been first set as a mere commentary. Thus Aristotle, discussing the essentials of social economy, quotes with approval the advice:

Vs. 405. "Get thee a dwelling first, and a woman, and ox for the ploughing."

"Woman" he takes to be wife. It is therefore likely that the next line in our text is a later intrusion since the philosopher's day:

Vs. 406. "Buy thou a woman, not wed her, that she may follow the oxen."

Seafaring is next discussed for over seventy lines. Ethical and ceremonial usages, from truth-telling to paring one's nails in private, fill as many more. Lastly appears a real calendar of lucky and unlucky days. The closing strain is more enlightened and cheerful than any previous verses:

"Different men praise different days: they are rare who do know them.
Vss. 823-28. Often a day may prove as a step-mother, often a mother.
Blessèd and happy is he who, aware of all that concerns them,
Wisely works his task, unblamed in the sight of immortals,
Judging the omens aright, and succeeds in avoiding transgression."





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We seem to hear in this composition at least four or five distinct and somewhat discordant voices. Not one is a fresh, joyous utterance of the Homeric prime. Yet the mass of ancient and sincere if crude utterance has a quaint charm of its own. Certainly it offers material for almost endless discussion, and much curious information.

THEOGONY.

In a passage already cited, Herodotos sets a conjectural date for Hesiod and Homer, whom he credits with fixing the attributes and names of the Hellenic gods. This, is of course, a very naïve or a very audacious view for a Greek to take of his traditional faith. But the superior age and importance accorded to the Bœotian poet surprises us still more. The historian is no doubt thinking especially of the Hesiodic Theogony, which he appears to have read in much the same form as we now have it. Possibly he was also referring to a similar Theogony then ascribed to Homer, *e.g.*, the one included in the epic cycle, but not to the Iliad at all. The poem now under discussion really is, for us, the earliest source for many details in the pagan theology. But, of course, these tales are not in the main created by the versifier, who must usually be only recording and systematizing the creed of his people.

Herod., II., 53.

The invocation of the Muses runs on and on to one hundred and sixteen lines. Here for the first time occur the names of the nine. Claiming divine descent and supreme honor no less for minstrel than for monarch, the poet adds:

Vss. 77-79.

Vss. 98-102.

"Ay, though it may be a man with fresh-wrought trouble of spirit,
Bitterly vexed at heart, is pining, yet if a minstrel,
Liegeman of Muses, sing of the heroes' glories aforetime,

Or of the blessèd gods who have their abodes in Olympos,
—Soon he forgets his sorrow : his cares no more are remembered."

Cf. infra, p. 153. This passage appears little changed also among the "Homeric Hymns," and may have inspired a far loftier Bœotian poet, Pindar.

Hesiod is mentioned by name, as having met the Muses under the brow of holy Helicon and learned their song.

The actual myth of creation begins with Chaos (empty space), out of which Earth rises, produces and weds Uranos (Heaven), and brings forth for him a countless offspring, including Okeanos, whom Homer, like some later philosophers, had called the "source of all." Night is Earth's equally prolific sister.

Iliad, xiv., 246.

Even lists may teach us much. Thus first of the river-gods in Hesiod is Neilos, known to Homer only as the river Aigyptos. The Alpheios, the Danube, probably the Po, appear, not the Rhine nor Rhone. The limits of the world have widened since Homer. Yet "divine Scamander" has a distinguished place as the last in the long list.

Vs. 338. Vs. 345. Vs. 590.

Pandora reappears for a moment, and is called the mother of all women, but Prometheus's crime and torture interest this poet more.

Vss. 521 ff.

On the whole, the perspective is somewhat vague, and the lack of proportion glaring. The Titans, and their strife with the gods, take up far too much space. A hymn of forty verses to Hecate must surely be interpolated. Altogether, though often lofty in style, tolerably unified, and probably in the main a creation of one hand, the poem is less interesting than the Works and Days. Perhaps the best quotable passage is the one about Styx, mother of Strength and Force. In reward for aid against the Titans, Zeus makes her a holy

Vss. 411–52.

subterranean river, and the one object by which gods dare not swear falsely. Parts of the description seem drawn from the real Arcadian river that bears the name.

Vss. 775-805. "There is the goddess' abode who is hated among the immortals,
Awesome Styx. She is first-born daughter to refluent Ocean.
There, far off from the gods, is set her illustrious dwelling,
Covered above by enormous rocks : and about it on all sides
Firmly joined to the sky it stands by pillars of silver.
Seldom thither does swift-footed Iris, the daughter of Wonder,
Fare with the message she bringeth across the sea's wide ridges ;
Only so often as strife hath arisen among the immortals,
Whoso speaks untruth, of them that abide on Olympos,
Iris is sent by Zeus, from afar in her golden pitcher
That great oath of the gods to fetch : the water so famous.
Coldly it trickleth down from a rock both rugged and lofty.
Whoso, among the immortals who dwell upon snowy Olympos'
Summits, perjures himself, as he pours thereof a libation,
Breathless is destined to lie, until a year is completed.
Never to him ambrosia, the food of immortals, is proffered,
Never the nectar ; but still without breathing he tarries, and speechless,
There on his couch outstretched ; and evil the slumber that wraps him.
When this penalty now with the long year comes to completion,
Still thereafter another more grievous evil awaits him.
Nine years long is he parted from gods whose life is unending,
Never with them may he join in council, never at banquet,
Nine full years. In the tenth he again may mingle among them,
Joining in speech with immortals who hold the Olympian dwellings.
—Such is the oath gods swear by the deathless Stygian waters."

The diverse yet overlapping accounts of Prometheus in the two chief Hesiodic poems do not seem to be from the same hand, and there are many small discrepancies. But the name of Hesiod is quite vague and uncertain enough to cover both.

THE SHIELD OF HERACLES, ETC.

The Theogony, in our manuscripts, ends lamely with an unfulfilled promise:

> "Now of the race of mortal women sing me, ye sweet-voiced Muses Olympian."

This is clearly the beginning of a lost section or poem. The allusion is to the mothers of heroic children by divine fathers. Such a Catalogue of Women is included in later lists among the Hesiodic works. One section of it survives. This is the beginning of the late, feeble, and unoriginal brief epic, the "Shield." In these fifty-six lines Zeus's amour with Alcmene, and the birth of Heracles, are described. A later rhapsode has awkwardly added one adventure of the toiling hero. In this, again, about half the space is filled with a description of Heracles's shield, imitated, of course, from the familiar passage of the Iliad. The whole performance is commonplace and tasteless.

The numerous lost works, and extant fragments, attributed to Hesiod need not be discussed here.

This whole body of verse is distinctly post-Homeric, and yet more clearly inferior in quality to the two great epics. The glories of the heroic age seem not only far away, but almost forgotten. Some such convulsion as the Dorian invasion has submerged the splendor of the past in Greece proper. Even this humble echo of epic inspiration comes avowedly from over seas. The struggle toward full self-consciousness has been begun again, in more sober and less confident spirit. These Hesiodic poems are, among extant

works, the first attempt of the Hellenic mind toward connected philosophic thought. With this mingles, rather unnaturally, a trickle from genuine poetic fountains. Yet Aischylos, as well as Pindar, has been influenced though not dominated by a Theogony very like that which we now read.

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The best renderings of Hesiod in verse are by Elton, "Works and Days" in rhymed couplets, "Shield" and "Theogony" in blank verse. A very useful volume of the Bohn library contains these, with prose versions of Hesiod, Theognis, Callimachos, and copious notes.

CHAPTER X

HEXAMETER AND THE EARLY PHILOSOPHERS

THE Hesiodic Theogony, indeed any theogony, whether poetical in its intention or not, may be regarded as a piece of philosophic speculation. In such a volume as the present one, however, we are properly concerned not with the history of thought, least of all of logical and analytical thought, but with the growth of artistic expression in language. Such a poem interests us, therefore, not because of but in spite of any serious didactic or speculative purpose. When that purpose alone spurs to utterance, the result is not literature at all, as may be most clearly seen, *e.g.*, in Euclid's geometry.

The guesses of the early Greeks as to the number of elements and their combination, at least as they are meagrely reported to us, are extremely unscientific, even childish. That Thales predicted an eclipse, or Anaximander constructed a celestial sphere of bronze, is interesting, but remote from our main theme. That water, air, or infinity is the "source of all," an untutored Indian might surmise. Some of Heraclitos's "dark sayings," as "All things flow," "War is father of all," his eternal alternation of the "upward way and the downward way," are profounder ventures after truth, and also far more interesting for their figurative utterance. Still more did the Pythagorean teachings influence Plato, and through him all later thought.

That all these early truth-seekers sprang from Eastern Ionia shows once more how far in advance were the colonial cities. Even Pythagoras migrated from Samos to Cro-

ton in Southern Italy. He perhaps, like Socrates, never wrote at all. The others are lost authors, as is also Anaxagoras, of whom Plato complains that he started so nobly in making divine Intelligence the source of all, but then failed to reveal its methods of working, and indeed relapsed into all the childish notions of the old cosmogonies.

Three early philosophers, however, used the metre and dialect of the Ionian epic. To this extent, at least, they may fairly be included in the school of later Homerids. Each of the trio wrote a poem, called by him or by later admirers "Peri physeôs," which is closely equivalent to the superscription of Lucretius's great work, "De Rerum Natura." From these poems, chiefly, we quote here.

XENOPHANES.

(Sixth Century B.C.)

The eldest of the three, Xenophanes of Colophon, actually composed epics on the foundation of his native city and the colonizing of Elea in Italy. Yet in his extant hexameters he will certainly not be accused of undue servility to his masters:

"Everything is ascribed to the gods by Hesiod and Homer,
Whatsoever among mankind is shameful and wicked.
Numberless lawless deeds of the gods by them are recorded,
Thievishness, unchastity, ay, and deceit of each other!"

Again he ridicules in bold and scornful words the whole tendency of his people to shape their gods in their own image:

"Still men hold the belief that the gods were born and begotten,
Wear such garb as themselves, and have like bodies and voices.
Yet it is certain if hands were bestowed upon oxen or lions,

If with their hands they could draw, and the works of men should accomplish,
Horses like unto horses, and oxen in likeness of oxen,
So would they draw their figures of gods, and fashion the bodies
Like in every way to their own!"

To Xenophanes we return for a moment on a later page of this book. We would gladly know more as to the career of this long-lived wandering teacher, and most fearless of critics. Since he founded the Eleatic school of philosophic thought, he no doubt spent many of his years in the colonial city on the Italian shore.

Infra, p. 96.

PARMENIDES.

(Fifth Century B.C.)

The greatest member of that school, Parmenides, born in Elea about 500 B.C., is referred to as a venerable man when he met and overawed the youthful Socrates. The scene is described in the Platonic dialogue that bears the elder sage's name, and may be essentially true. The chief Eleatic doctrine seems to have been akin to what we call idealism. Being, or life, they taught, is one, indivisible, indestructible, unchangeable. As to the apparently changing phenomena of our own experience we really know nothing. The lecture by Sophia (Wisdom) on this topic is partially extant, and to most readers is distinctly unedifying. Indeed, she herself declares that wherever we begin we must forever return to the golden truth,—that Being and Not-being are diverse.

Poetic, at least by comparison, is the account of the sage's journey to her palace:

"There I arrived, since thither the horses of thought had conveyed me,
Whirling the chariot on: and maidens guided my journey

Unto the light, unwinding the veils that had covered their foreheads:
Maidens, Helios' daughters, who came from the dwelling of darkness.
There are the gates whence issue the paths of Night and of Daylight.
Stone their threshold, and stone is a lintel also above them.
Yet is the gateway lofty, and fitted with ponderous portals.
Justice, a mighty avenger, possesses the keys that unloose them. . . .
Heartily there did the goddess receive me. She with her right hand
Clasped mine own, as she spoke these words: and thus she addrest me:
'Youth, who with charioteers immortal art come a companion,
Thou who, by horses drawn, art arrived at my habitation,
Welcome! and nowise evil the destiny hither that brings thee.
Verily far from the tracks of men is the path thou hast followed.'"

EMPEDOCLES.

(Fifth Century B.C.)

Empedocles's four hundred and eighty extant hexameters suffice to prove him a true poet, of daring imagination and noble style. If the poem were entire, it might overshadow even the masterpiece of Lucretius, who repeatedly utters in the strongest terms his reverent admiration for his Sicilian master. A haughty aristocrat of Acragas (Agrigentum), who once even refused the royal crown, and later went into life-long exile, Empedocles is especially famous for the manner of his death. He is said to have leaped into the crater of Ætna, to create the belief that he had been translated. The volcano accepted the sacrifice of life, but later defeated the trick, by throwing up one of his bronze sandals. This is a tale which the meditative

genius of Matthew Arnold fails to render quite intelligible or credible on its psychological side.

The notion that man's soul is an exile, fallen through sin from a diviner home, the doctrine of transmigration, or repeated incarnation, the fancy that we may even remember faintly the life of other worlds,—all these are favorite beliefs of Mystics. Plato himself was probably much swayed by the splendid and sincere poetry of Empedocles. A few passages may be attempted in English rhythm:

"There is a doom of Fate, an ancient decree of immortals,
Never to be unmade, by amplest pledges attested:
That, if a spirit divine, who shares in the life everlasting,
Through transgression defiles his glorious body by bloodshed,
Or if he perjure himself by swearing unto a falsehood,
Thrice ten thousand seasons he wanders apart from the Blessèd,
Passing from birth to birth, through various species of mortal;
Changing ever the path of life, yet ever unresting:
Even as I now roam, from gods far-wandered, an exile,
Yielding to maddening strife."

"Once already have I as a youth been born, as a maiden,
Bush, and wingèd bird, and silent fish in the waters. . . .
After what honors, and after how long and blissful existence,
Thus am I wretchedly doomed to abide in the meadows of mortals!
Loudly I wept and wailed at beholding the place unfamiliar. . . ."

In another work, and in a much less ecstatic mood, he says:

"Oh, my friends, whoso in Acragas' beautiful city
Have your dwelling aloft, whose hearts are set upon virtue,

Reverent harbors of guests, who have no share in dishonor,
Greeting! But I as a god divine, no longer a mortal,
Dwell with you, by all in reverence held, as is fitting,
Girt with fillets about, and crowned with wreaths of rejoicing.
Whatsoever the folk whose prosperous cities I enter,
There I of women and men am revered. By thousands they follow,
Questioning where they may seek for the path that leadeth to profit.
These are in need of prophetic words; and others, in illness,
Since they have long been racked with the grievous pangs of diseases,
Crave that I utter the charm whose power is sovran in all things."

There is much very human pride and self-delusion here, but never the tone of conscious imposture. We do not believe the imperious singer perished in any such spirit. He really seems to have been, like Paracelsus, far ahead of his age in scientific knowledge. Thus he clearly distinguished matter and force, which Lucretius constantly confuses. One "discovery" of his was accepted as the corner-stone of science for thousands of years:

"Hearken and learn, that four, at the first, are the sources of all things:
Fire, and water, and earth, and lofty ether unbounded.
Thence springs all that is, that shall be, or hath been aforetime."

The life of Empedocles carries us far into the fifth century before Christ, that is, beyond the whole period of lyric into the epoch of Attic drama. Yet he is one of the most Homeric in the whole list, and would have been better justified than was Roman Ennius in believing his own soul to be the reincarnated spirit of the prehistoric poet.

The ancient metre, however, became less easy, and of course less natural, as Attic Greek developed. With the dactylic measure was closely linked also the tradition of a dialect which grew ever more and more remote and artificial. Yet neither was wholly abandoned. Oracles, inscriptions, all archaic or religious associations, might naturally revert to hexameter. In the last age of the true Hellenic life we shall see a notable revival of this most venerable poetic form.



BOOK II

THE LYRIC PERIOD



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

Political Events.		*Literary Events.*	
776 B.C.	Beginning of the Olympiads.		For Homer, Hesiod, the Epic Cycle, and the earliest Homeric Hymns, no dates can be given. Homer and Hesiod are assigned by Herodotos to the ninth century before Christ.
753	*Founding of Rome.*		
743–724	First war between Messenia and Sparta.		
734	Syracuse founded from Corinth.		
	700–600 B.C.		700–600 B.C
			Callinos, elegiac poet, Ephesos.
			Archilochos, elegiac iambic and lyric poet, Paros.
			Simonides, iambic poet, Samos and Amorgos.
685–668	Second war between Messenia and Sparta. Complete subjugation of the Messenians.		Tyrtaios, elegiac and lyric poet, in Sparta during the second Messenian war.
683	Annual archonship instituted in Athens.		
670–570	Hereditary tyranny in Sikyon.		Terpandros from Lesbos, musician in Sparta, and
625–585	Periandros tyrant of Corinth.	676	victor at the Carneian games.
621	Legislation of Dracon in Athens.	640 (?)	Alcman from Sardis, choral poet in Sparta.
		630 (?)	Mimnermos, elegiac poet, Colophon.
			Arion from Methymna in Lesbos, choral poet, at Periandros's court.
			Alkaios, Sappho, Erinna, lyric poets in Lesbos.
			Stesichoros, choral poet, Himera in Sicily.

600–500 B.C.		600–500 B.C.
595–586	First Sacred War.	Thales in Miletos, first of Ionian philosophers.
594	Legislation of Solon.	Solon, in Athens, elegiac and iambic poet.
586	Beginning of Pythian games.	
570	Abolition of tyranny in Sikyon.	
560–510	Tyranny of Pisistratos and his sons in Athens.	
560	Crœsus of Lydia conquers Greek cities in Asia.	
546	Cyrus of Persia, victor over Crœsus, subdues also the Asiatic Greeks.	
532–523	Polycrates tyrant of Samos.	Anacreon from Teos, lyric poet, at Polycrates's court.
		Ibycos from Rhegion, choral poet, also patronized by Polycrates.
		Theognis in Megara, elegiac poet.
		Phokylides in Miletos, elegiac poet.
		Hipponax in Ephesos, satirical iambic poet.
		534 B.C. Dramatic festival transferred from Icaria to Athens.
510	Expulsion of Hippias, Pisistratos's son.	Pythagoras from Samos, philosopher, mathematician, political reformer in Southern Italy.
509	*Expulsion of Roman kings.*	
509	Cleisthenes restores and develops the Solonian constitution.	Thespis, Choirilos, Pratinas, Phrynichos, dramatic poets in Athens.
		Heracleitos, philosopher, in Ephesos.
		Parmenides, philosopher, in Elea.
		Hecataios, chronicler, in Miletos.



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CIRCE AND HER VICTIMS, ODYSSEY X.

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CHAPTER XI

EPIC AND LYRIC

Our word lyric is misleading, especially in speaking of ancient Greece, where nearly all poetry, as recited, was accompanied by instrumental music. There are several descriptions in the Odyssey of such minstrelsy. Perhaps *Melic* may yet displace the more familiar word, though it means little more than poetry marked off in stanzas. But though names are never adequate definitions, and the forms of art tend to glide into each other, yet the general contrast between epic and lyric is evident. Epic is objective, retrospective, in a sense historical. The singer himself, and his audience, are hardly thought of as we read the Iliad. The blind minstrel from Chios, the querulous farmer of Ascra, may violate this discretion, but they do not destroy the canon of good taste that underlies it.

Supra, pp. 55, 61.

Lyric song, by its very brevity, becomes more intense, personal, contemporary. It is also frankly subjective. Yet the artist should not intrude his own follies, sins, or whims, as such, upon a busy world. Only so much as seems typical of our own experience, that is, of human life generally, can be fitly eternalized.

Of course finished epics of many thousand verses are not the first forms of poetry. The swaying bough and refluent wave teach men rhythm, which is repeated in their own pulse, breath, and tread. The act of breathing makes the pause that marks not only a verse, but usually also a simple sentence or clause. The need of combined defence

or united attack, when fighting stronger beasts or an alien clan, is the first step of social progress. Hence the march, the war-song, the exultant chant of victory, are doubtless older far than that consciousness of mightier ancestors, human or divine, which is the soul of the epic. Beginning in mere cries ruder than our hurrahs, always closely allied to noisy music, and to the rhythmical bodily action of which our conventional dance is a faint dying memory, these primeval songs of savages never come down to an age of culture, though they may perchance be observed and recorded by a civilized stranger, like Stevenson in Samoa.

Homer is no such savage, but he is as least much nearer to the dawn than we. His art is perfected, yet his ethical spirit is largely still a splendid barbarism, as Plato so austerely complains. We may still hear the heavy tramp and rude chant of a forgotten ancestry in Achilles's exultation over Hector slain:

Iliad, xxii., 391–94. "Now let us sing our pæan of victory, sons of Achaians,
While to the hollowed ships we march, and carry the body.
Mighty the fame we have won; we have slain the illustrious Hector,
Who like unto a god was adored in the town of the Trojans."

Almost as early, savage man shapes a god in his own image, and frames the prayer for victory. Perchance this is the first form likely to become a fixed ritual, fit for repeated use. That the priest, Druid, "Medicineman," is often also the bard or minstrel of the clan, is a familiar truth. But the responses, at least, to his prayer, may be made by all. There is a savage realism, which may be a proof of hoary age, in the general cry of both armies, when the two champions meet to decide the victory. As the libation is poured out they murmur, in grimly vivid archaic phrase:

"Most glorious Zeus, and other deathless gods,
Whichever host shall first the pledge transgress,
Their brains be like this wine on earth out-
poured,
Theirs and their sons: their wives may others hold!"

Iliad iii., 298-301.

Intercession with an enraged divinity, thanksgiving for victory, dirge for the dead, brief lyric praise for a hero of the last generation, may also be found in the world-picture of Homer, though all are cunningly woven into the single grand design. The claim of kinship with their very human deities, the belief in the former triumphs of the clan against more mighty foes, are natural developments of the simpler themes. These are the roots of epic, which is a relatively late triumph of conscious art.

Iliad vi., 303-10; xxii., 391-95; xix., 287-300; v., 638-42.

Much later, of course, than these rude warriors, who win their slave-wives by force or capture from other tribes, arises the marriage hymn, or any love-song in a modern sense. Even the harvest chant must perhaps wait for a more peaceful generation than Agamemnon's to create and hold it dear. All these may also be pointed out, indeed, in the Iliad, but only in one of its latest additions. The scenes on Achilles's shield include pictures of such free civic life as that of which we caught a glimpse in the Delian Apollo-hymn. It is in this passage that we meet the band of youths and maidens

"Bearing in woven baskets the honeyed fruit
of the vineyard."

Iliad, xviii., 568.

In a companion-picture the "hymenaios" or wedding march is first mentioned and briefly described.

In general, then, it is our belief that some forms of real lyric poetry must have flourished among the Hellenic clans centuries before the Ionic epic, even long before any sus-

tained lays were composed to transmit tales of a real or imagined past. But all such early lyric poetry is either lost, or, as we prefer to believe, taken up, unwasted, into the precious Homeric masterpieces.

At any rate, the lyric poetry actually preserved, even in tantalizing fragments, for us, begins about 700 B.C., that is, after the Iliad and Odyssey were fully fixed in essentially their present form. It is first developed, also, under the full epic influence.

Whether the chief epic artificers really lived under such rulers and social conditions as they describe, we may never know; but nearly all the poetry we have thus far discussed, except the "Works and Days," is at least inspired by the ideals of a feudal and martial age. A free democracy is by no means fully established, anywhere in Greece, at the dawn of authentic history. Oligarchy is rather the rule, and a popular upheaval usually only enables a popular demagogue to establish his more oppressive and violent tyranny. Yet the rights of the common man are already far more boldly asserted, and the more personal utterance of the lyric is a natural result. Having its origin apparently on the Eastern side of the Ægean, the poetic activity of this period gradually extends to the peninsular home of the Hellenic race as well.



CHAPTER XII

THE ELEGIAC COUPLET

In the progress of an art there are usually no violent breaks. The new is an offshoot of the old. So the first couplet was but a slight variation on the dactylic measure. In every second line the third and sixth feet were reduced to a single syllable each. The change is important, partly because it produced a well-marked and finished stanza. The latter half of the shorter line has regularly two dactyls.

The effect of this sudden fall or break at the end of every other verse varies in different hands, but usually has a somewhat depressing effect, which may have been indicated by the strange and perhaps foreign word "elegus." It is, as Professor Jebb says, always meditative, often sad. If we attempt to obey even the Greek law for quantity in vowels, the new measure may perhaps be fairly illustrated thus:

Lófty a | gainst our | Wéstern | dáwn | up | rises A | chílles.
Hé among | héroes a | lóne | síngeth or | tóucheth the | lýre.

This movement is too difficult in English to be used freely for sustained translation, but it must be understood that all the poets mentioned in this chapter employed it. The prevailing mournful tone seems to have assigned it at first to use in dirges, the effect being heightened by music of the pipes, especially composed therefor. Eventually it had a much wider use, often was not sung but merely recited like an epic. In the hands of Theognis and Solon

it seems at times to take the place which we should give to an essay or an oration : art-types which were much later in development.

KALLINOS.

(700 B.C.)

Earliest of the elegiac poets, we are told, was Kallinos of Ephesos. The single important fragment of his poetry, preserved in the scrap-book of Stobaios, strikes simply and strongly the one note of patriotic and manly duty in battle. We can easily imagine the shrill pipes playing a swift marching rhythm, while this chant is intoned :

" Verily glorious is it, and sweet, to contend with the foeman,
Fighting for children and wife, in the defence of our land,
Holding the spear on high, and a stout heart under the buckler
Throbbing, when at the first cometh the shock of the fray."

The fame of the hero, the shame of the coward, the certainty of death for all, are the familiar themes.

The occasion for such an outburst was the invasion of a Kimmerian host from the north into Asiatic Hellas. But a fraternal war with Magnesia is also mentioned. From first to last, the deadliest blows came to Hellenism from within. If capable of harmonious action, the Greeks might have withstood barbarous assaults, or the more insidious influences from baser national ideals about them. Of this early Ionic life in Asia we have only fragmentary knowledge, but " Divided we fall " is its epitaph. The great trading communities of Greeks grew swiftly rich, cultivated, luxurious,—and early became tributary to Lydian and later to Persian overlords. A race has no more freedom than it deserves.

TYRTAIOS.

(675 B.C.?)

Very similar in tone are the martial elegies composed by Tyrtaios for the Lacedæmonians. He describes himself as the actual leader of their host. That the Spartans in desperate straits had applied first to the Delphic oracle, then, by Apollo's order, to the Athenians, for a champion, and that the latter, in derision, had sent them a lame schoolmaster, whose gift of song was not then appreciated: all this reads like an invention of a comic poet. Tyrtaios expresses pride in the exploits of early Spartan ancestors. They were no doubt his own.

After describing with ghastly vividness the old man fallen in battle, Tyrtaios adds the famous words that still throb with eager life:

> "For the young man all is becoming,
> While in his glorious prime bright is the bloom of his youth.
> Gladly beheld of men is he, and longed for of women
> Living: and beautiful still slain in the van of the fight."
>
> *cf.* Iliad xxii. 9–16.

The close resemblance to epic passages strikes every student. It was doubtless felt as an added charm by the Greeks themselves. The metre, the dialect, the art gen-
685 B.C. —668 B.C. erally, is still far nearer to Homer's than to the common usages of Dorian Sparta in the days of the second Messenian war.

It is even probable that this measure was now become as obligatory as the hexameter itself had been before it. Tyrtaios's chief extant poem, called "Eunomia," is a sort of manual for good citizenship in a very rude martial commonwealth. Prose, if it had existed as an art-form, would have befitted quite as well the best-known line:

> "Greed for gain, naught else, Sparta shall ever destroy."

One fragment of a marching-song has a freer anapæstic swing, and also a much broader Doric coloring in the dialect. It may be imitated thus:

"O youths of our populous Sparta,
Ye children of citizen fathers,
Thrust forward your shields in the léft hand,
Unterrified lift ye the lances,
Nor bé of your lives over-cautious,
For 'tis nót the tradition of Sparta!"

But Tyrtaios is in one respect quite unhomeric. The valor of Sparta was not bred in great Hellenic wars against lawless, foreign aggressors like Paris. These very Messenians, conquered after generations of heroic defence, were so treated that their national pride survived, as in the Finns or Poles, and was used at last to create a stronghold of deadly hostility on Sparta's frontier. With their Arcadian neighbors to northward their relations were little better. Again we are reminded, that even the reluctant united action against Troy never found its parallel in historic Hellas.

MIMNERMOS.

(Circa 620 B.C.)

The blundering lexicographer Suidas makes even Tyrtaios "a Laconian *or a Milesian.*" Certainly for our next poet we return to the luxurious Asian cities. Mimnermos of Colophon, moreover, is the first unmistakable decadent. His plaintive world-weariness fits well his elegiac stanza, but indicates that the swift-grown life of Eastern Hellas has lost much already of its pristine vigor.

Yet Mimnermos, who was, we are told, a professional musician with the pipes no less than a poet, chanced to be the one exquisite artist in tone and word-color among all who used this apparently simple measure. In his hands it

acquires a mournful charm and melody, still felt even by us of alien speech. The Greek Anthology is full of sweet feebler voices echoing his. To him Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius, decadents like him, and like him men of minor genius following a more robust age, looked back as their true master. Like them, he seems to have shared the frankly sensual passions of the true Bohemian, lamenting the swift passing of youthful vigor, and the fickleness of a base-born girl flute-player named Nanno.

His philosophy of life is not brave nor Stoical; to us it seems also nowise novel. Yet it always has appealed, and always will appeal, to each generation of swift-aging mortals. We dare not attempt his measure in citing him.

"Over my body runs a grewsome chill.
I shudder as I see man's early bloom
Lovely and fair: would that it might abide!
But brief in passing is our precious youth,
Even as a dream. Weary unshapely age
Straightway is hovering above our head,
Unhonored, hateful, that unknowable
Doth make us, blears our eyes, confounds our wits."

The modern reader may prefer, for a similar passage, the graceful rhymes of John Addington Symonds:

"Ah! fair and lovely bloom the flowers of youth;
On men and maids they beautifully smile:
But soon comes doleful eld, who, void of ruth,
Indifferently afflicts the fair and vile:
Then cares wear out the heart; the eyes forlorn
Scarce reck the very sunshine to behold—
Unloved by youths, of every maid the scorn—
So hard a lot God lays upon the old."

But the peculiar aroma of a poet's product is almost always lost in any process of decanting. Catullus exultant in insolent youth, Petrarch making insincere love in languorous

falsetto, Shelley beating his wings against the prison-walls of the body, Heine, the lovable cynic, can be only fairly heard each in his own measures, and in his mother-tongue. Even so Mimnermos, the Ionian, is the poet of the elegiac Greek couplet, which cannot be echoed in our speech.

SOLON.

(Circa 645–555 B.C.)

Solon the statesman, as portrayed for us by Plutarch, is a most interesting and original figure. He had a prophetic glimpse of civic conditions which even now are hardly attained anywhere. Enlightened patriotism, acceptance of the concessions and compromises which leave the individual still reasonably free in a strong and helpful commonwealth, frank yet moderate discussion, cheerful submission to the judgment of the majority: these are lessons still but half-learned. An even more charming sketch is afforded us, by Herodotos, of Solon the philosopher, relating stories of humble happiness, and bidding the lord of Lydia account no life fortunate until its tale is closed.

Herod., i., 29–33. Plutarch's Solon.

Solon the versifier is still much the same man. He best illustrates the truth that, in an age ignorant of prose as an art-form, the political speech, or the philosophical statesman's farewell address, may be cast in verse: to which even early codes of law have in some lands been reduced.

Mimnermos had uttered a wish for a care-free and painless death at sixty. Solon rather melodiously bids him change his limit to the eightieth year. Yet, in an excellent parallel to Shakespeare's seven ages, he divides life into ten periods of seven years each, and closes like the Psalmist:

"If he the measure of ten times seven hath fully completed,
Not unfittingly then cometh the issue of death."

Some single phrases are deservedly famous, as:

"Still learning many a lesson I grow old,"

or,

"Hidden forever from human sight are the plans of immortals."

There are much longer pieces extant, our store being recently somewhat enriched from citations in Aristotle's recovered monograph on the Athenian Constitution. One ode especially, of seventy-six verses, begins with a formal invocation of the "Glorious children of Mnemosyne and Olympian Zeus, Pierian Muses!" But Solon is not often a true creator of imaginative beauty. His verse is sententious, gnomic, didactic.

Anticipating somewhat our next chapter, it may be mentioned that Solon used cleverly also the new trochaic and iambic measures. In the latter especially, we have a modest, tasteful *Apologia pro vita sua*. Many an unmetrical peroration of later days, for instance Demosthenes's in his speech "On the Crown," is far more impassioned and less prosaic. The wretched social conditions which he had found in Attica are clearly to be seen:

"And many to their god-built native town
Did I restore, once sold, some wrongfully,
Some righteously, and some perforce exiled
Thro' grievous want; men who no longer spoke
Our Attic speech, so wide their wanderings."

Solon is interesting, finally, as the first example of literary taste on Attic soil: but we really lose relatively little by reading him in a prose translation, even when he essays to echo Tyrtaios's and Homer's phrases.

"Never by doom of Zeus or will of blessed gods shall our city be destroyed. So high-hearted a warder, daughter

we feel that the style is the ma
whose strongest elements can be
language.

THEOGNIS.

(550–500 B.C.?)

The author oftenest cited among t
brief, sententious maxims as to the c
only important poet of little Megara, T.
lived after the middle of the sixth ce
noble birth, and haughtily aristocrati
pathies. The rich plebeians are his esp

> "Rams, asses, horses, out of blooded
> We crave, and all demand them n
> Yet gentle men do not disdain a w
> Ignobly born—who brings abunda

Partisan faction, popular upheaval, e
loss of property, personal suffering, hav
until he hardly believes in divine Provid
sert a beggar," and unworthy men most
future life he seems to have lost faith alt

> "Joyous delight in youth I take, fo
> Beneath the earth, when dead, dw

tered aristocrat, disgusted with this world and hopeless of another, some precepts quite Machiavellian in spirit.

> "Cajole your foe: yet, helpless in your hands,
> Wreak vengeance on him, making no pretence."

A milder worldly wisdom breathes in

> "Trust not your business to all friends alike:
> Few of the many have a faithful mind."

More insidious is the advice:

> "Turn to each friend an ever-changeful soul,
> Fitting your nature to the mood of each.
> Now follow this man, now be liker that.
> Better than too much virtue still is craft."

Though some seven hundred couplets have come down to us under Theognis's name, they form no connected whole, and perhaps do not include a single entire poem. We have, rather, an anthology of the sententious maxims which the later ancients loved to quote as his. Passages of various lengths are included which, on other and quite as good authority, are credited to Tyrtaios, to Mimnermos, and to Solon. Not merely the metre and dialect, but the tone and spirit, make it impossible to assign to each his own by any internal test. Theognis remains, at any rate, the chief expositor of this rather disconsolate, selfish, and unimaginative proverbial philosophy. Though superior in form, it is distinctly lower in humane sympathy, and in ethical quality generally, than the homely eulogies on thrift and social usefulness so long uttered by Benjamin Franklin in the voice of Poor Richard.

Theognis's genuine poetry is often distinguished by the recurring name of Kyrnos. This was a younger nobleman, on whom the political hopes of his class seem to have rested confidently for a time. Theognis usually addresses him

in the tone of a loving Mentor,—as we ourselves still say, unconsciously recalling young Telemachos's maturer friend in the Odyssey. In any rather select and reserved social life, such as was once found in English colleges, the relation between affectionate tutor and loyal pupil may still have much of the same sentiment and warmth which the Greeks so often threw into this much-discussed relation. The fact that women were quite excluded from the intellectual side of social life must also be borne in mind.

Finally, Theognis's shortcomings, or excesses, as an ethical teacher, may perhaps be best understood if we remember that these poems or songs, preserved to us in more or less fragmentary fashion, were composed, not by a grave moral philosopher for the uplifting of his folk, but chiefly to preserve the fame of this boy-favorite on the lips of his own generation and of aftertime: to make him the favorite toast at the banquets of the somewhat dissipated Megarian nobility. In truth, the most poetic outburst in these somewhat prosaic pages is this haughty appeal. The passage is cited from the free and brilliant rhymed version of John Hookham Frere.

"You soar aloft, and over land and wave
Are born triumphant on the wings I gave
(The swift and mighty wings, Music and Verse).
Your name in easy numbers, smooth and terse
Is wafted o'er the world; and heard among
The banquetings and feasts, chaunted and sung,
Heard and admired. The modulated air
Of flutes, and voices of the young and fair
Recite it, and to future times shall tell,
When, closed within the dark sepulchral cell,
Your form shall moulder, and your empty ghost
Wander along the dreary Stygian coast.
Yet shall your memory flourish, green and young,
Recorded and revived on every tongue,

In continents and islands, every place
That owns the language of the Grecian race.
No purchased prowess of a racing steed,
But the triumphant Muse, with airy speed,
Shall bear it wide and far, o'er land and main,
A glorious and imperishable strain,
A mighty prize, gratuitously won,
Fixed as the earth, immortal as the sun."

Theognis, unlike Solon, confines himself to the elegiac couplet. A measure so fashionable for centuries did not die out suddenly. In fact, no brief stanza was ever found quite so effective. For a curt, crisp inscription, especially, this form remained a favorite. From the desire in such cases to leave a clean-cut image, or a biting thought, in the memory of him who read as he passed, was developed the especial type whose origin and spirit alike are clearly preserved in our own word *epigram*, originally a mere Hellenistic equivalent for *inscription*. A certain monumental, or at least memorial nature, it should always retain. It preserves, usually, the remembrance of a special occasion or moment. The more leisurely swing of the dactyls, the final thud of the pentameter, are here combined with deadly effect. The younger Simonides will recall us to this special theme. Catullus, Martial, even Goethe and Schiller, found the same form still a most effective one for epigrammatic assault on folly, pretence, or wickedness.

But no single author of elegiac verse after Theognis requires extended discussion. Phokylides of Miletus is practically a lost writer. The gnomic poem of two hundred and thirty hexameters which long passed under his name is the work of an Alexandrian Jew, not older than 200 B.C. So early as verse 7 the command,

"First pay honor to God, and after him to thy parents,"

should have suggested Hebrew influences.

Through most of the sixth century we also hear the fearless, rather critical voice of the roving philosopher Xenophanes.

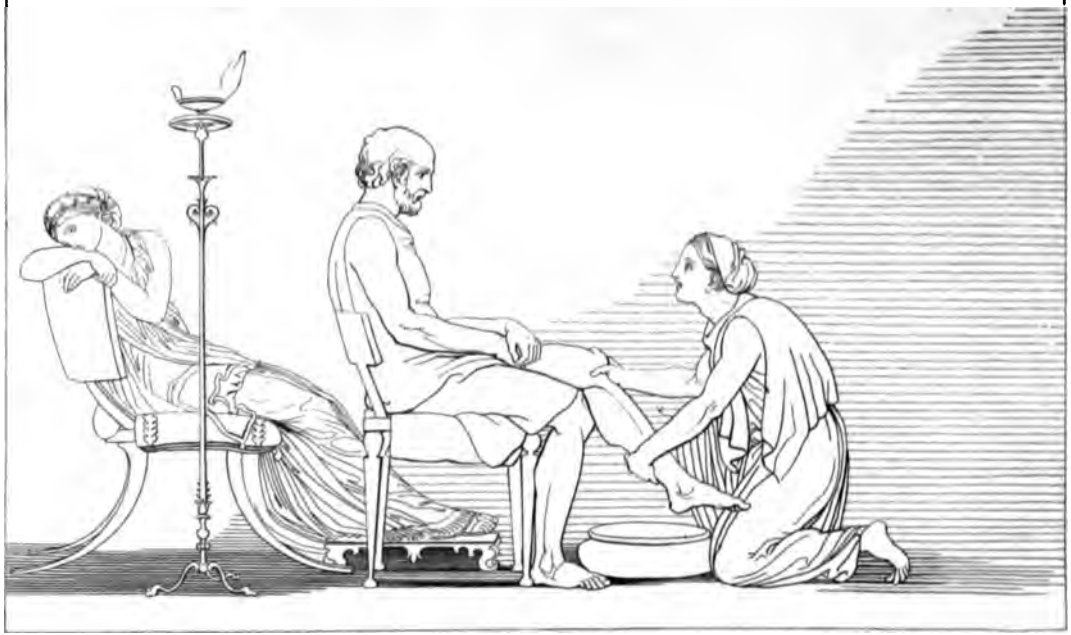
"Seven and sixty years already I widely have wandered,
Through the Hellenic lands strewing the seed of my thought.
Twenty the years of my life ere that, and five in addition,
If I am able to speak truthfully as to my age."

Some of his brave words against the retention of the ruder myths, tales of Titans, giants, and centaurs, are recorded in elegiac verse. He belongs, however, properly elsewhere, illustrating the continued use of the pure hexameter in early philosophy.

Supra, pp. 71-2

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For this entire book, on lyric poetry generally, the student should by all means consult John Addington Symonds's "Greek Poets," both for his graceful translations and for the copious discussions. An excellent brief anthology is W. H. Appleton's "Greek Poets in English Verse" (Houghton). J. H. Frere, most brilliant of translators, has made a free rendering of all Theognis's verse, and reconstructed his life therefrom, in too confident fashion. This genial work is contained in a volume of the Ancient Classics for English Readers.



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CHAPTER XIII

BEGINNINGS OF IAMBIC AND TROCHAIC VERSE

THE dactylic hexameter, including the elegiac verse, grew much less easy or natural in classical Greek than it had been in the Homeric dialect. In fact, the later conditions were partly the same as in English. The article had become a necessity. Prepositions were more constantly used. When connected with verbs they were no longer separable, but strictly prefixes. Ornate epithets, and resonant adjectives generally, were out of date. Thought and speech grew curter and more exact. The ordinary sentences, beginning with a short and unemphatic syllable, fell, as Aristotle remarked, most easily into the swifter iambic rhythm.

The chief triumph of this metre is, of course, in the dialogue of Attic drama. The group of authors here discussed may be regarded as the forerunners of that great epoch.

The Greek language is so fully inflected that it craves twelve syllables for the turn of a thought which we regularly utter, far less melodiously, in ten. Hence the shorter form of our "blank verse," or normal iambic line. With us the movement is dignified, rather slow, and monotonous unless the verses be clearly marked by rhyme. But to a race familiar with hexameter only, iambics seemed lively, pointed, colloquial, fittest to drive home a taunt or clinch a truth with homely proverbial phrase. The need for such a winged shaft was early felt.

The real origin of *iambos*, the name or the form, is un-

known. The curious Greek habit of inventing a person to account for a thing is well illustrated by a passage in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. The mourning mother has just arrived in the palace of Eleusis's king.

Homeric Hymns, iv., 200-5.

"There, unsmiling, refusing to taste of food or of liquid,
Sate she, wasted away by desire for her daughter deep-girded;
—Till at the last, with her jests full many, the cunning Iambe,
Scoffing, diverted the holy Demeter, the reverend goddess,
So that she smiled, then laughed, and took on a cheerier spirit.
Often thereafter Iambe delighted her heart when in anger."

This is the first mention of the merry maid Iambe.

ARCHILOCHOS.

(Circa 675 B.C.?)

The first and most famous iambic satirist, like all great artists, defies our attempts to classify him. He lived nearly or quite as early as Kallinos himself. If his verses could be restored to us, he might be the largest figure in the whole domain of lyric poetry and subjective utterance generally. The ancients accorded him such supremacy, and coupled his name with Homer's. While an easy master of the elegy, he is said to have invented, or first to have used masterfully, the new iambic and trochaic measures, both separately and in brilliant combinations. Perhaps no lost roll of poetry is more to be deplored than his.

The tantalizing fragments give us vivid glimpses of a roving, lawless, not unhappy life, and some little notion of his temper, his wit, perhaps even of his genius. Born on the island of Paros, son of a noble father and a slave mother, the poet was betrothed to Neobule, daughter of Lycambes. When for some reason the lady broke off her

engagement, Archilochos so persecuted the family with iambic satire that the daughters hanged themselves to escape its sting. Such is the tradition, weakly upheld by so mild a stanza as:

"Father Lycambes, what a thought was that which turned your wits askew!
Once were they steadfast: now for all the town a laughing-stock are you."

Let us hope, at least, that remorse, too late, dictated the softer verse:

"Would that unto me 'twere granted Neobule's hand to clasp."

Crossing, we know not why, to Thasos, he became a professional soldier. As he sings contentedly in elegiacs,

"Gift of my own good spear is the wine and the bread well-kneaded.
Leaning upon my lance quaff I Ismarian wine."

And again, with proud consciousness of his rarer powers:

"Bounden servant am I to Enyalios, ruler of battle:
Yea, and the Muses' gift glorious know I as well."

In hasty flight after a skirmish with the barbarian tribe of Thracian Saiai he lost his shield: the greatest disgrace, it will be remembered, which the Spartan mother could imagine for her warrior son. This lighter-hearted soldier of fortune made a song of the incident, like Alcaios, Anacreon, and Horace after him. Thankful for life, he can win him another buckler quite as good. In such frankness, quite free from braggadocio, we find no touch of real cowardice.

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True comradeship he surely knew, who cried amid some sorrow shared,

> "Yet each is comfort to the other's heart."

Like all such adventurers, he consoled himself also with the thought that chance is changeful.

> "All unto the Gods are subject: often out of wretchedness
> Mortal men do they uplift who on the black earth prostrate lie:
> Often also overturning them that prosperously march,
> Flat upon their faces lay them. . . ."

In another key and a different connection occurs the more stoical reflection:

> "Yet, oh, my friend, a drug for cureless woe,
> Patient endurance still the gods bestow."

It would be a pleasant task to reconstruct, from these and other such fragments, the complete story of a stormy life, and of a true artist's career, doubtless once as clearly set forth in Archilochos's verse as in Benvenuto Cellini's famous autobiography. Some romancer may yet make the attempt. Even the prayers of such a man are characteristic. To the god of smiths, the forger of Achilles's armor, he cries:

> "Hearken, oh Hephaistos, lord, and, while I kneel, as my ally
> Be thou kindly, and such gifts as thou mayst grant do not deny."

The wandering toiler Heracles, Demeter the bread-giver, hear also his appeals. If he intones a pæan, it is not the calmer lyre-sung hymn of the Delphic Apollo-cult:

> "To the music of the pipes the Lesbian pæan I begin."

But above all, we hear gladly from such lips the earliest allusion to that wildest of the choral songs, the dithyramb, out of which drama grew at last. The genius of pious Aischylos was to tame its savage force without breaking its spirit, and develop it into tragedy.

"When my wits with wine are lightened, in Lord Dionysos' praise
Well know I the pleasant music of the dithyramb to raise."

We learn little as to the extent or end of this life-story. All the verses that survive are full of vigorous life: but such a nature would never grow as old as the querulous Mimnermos. If Archilochos really perished, as he would have wished, on the battle-field—fighting Greek against Greek, as was sadly proverbial—he was still young enough to bear arms. But the warrior's blood may cool as slowly as the lyric fire.

SIMONIDES OF AMORGOS.

(Circa 650 B.C.?)

This poet, often called Semonides, as if to deny him a share in the name of the younger and greater singer of Ceos, is still of the same century as Archilochos, perhaps quite as early. He was really a Samian born, and led a colony to the lesser isle. His elegies, including a "history" of his mother-city, are lost, either utterly or among the remains of his namesake's works. His extant iambics treat chiefly, in the bitterest spirit, the two fitting themes: the delusive mockery of human life in general, and the vileness of womankind.

"A god made women's wits, at first, diverse.
The one he fashioned from the bristly sow:
And in her household all things mixt with mud
Disordered lie, and tumbled on the ground.
But she herself unwashed, in clothes unclean,
Lieth in filthiness and waxeth fat."

Then follows the crafty daughter of the fox. The next borrows from the doggish nature only the bark and love for roving. Mud, salt water, the ass, the weasel, the mare, the monkey, supply the material for results hardly happier. Only he is blest who weds the offspring of the bee:

> "With her, and her alone, no fault abides.
> Under her hand his life shall bloom and grow.
> Belov'd with her loved husband she grows old,
> Bearing a fair and famous race of sons."

Promptly leaving this brighter exception, the cynic resumes his tirade against all other women-folk. The subject seems to have been his favorite. One evidence that Hesiod's "Works and Days" was early current in its present form is Simonides's couplet,

> "Naught better than a woman one can win,
> If she be noble; but if bad naught worse."

The proverbial tone is evident, yet the exact words chosen indicate that he is echoing in the new colloquial measure the statelier hexameters:

> "Never a man hath won him a nobler prize than a woman,
> If she be good; but again, there is naught else worse than a bad one."

HIPPONAX.

(550 B.C.?)

The cynic's snarl is not the tone for any true harmony. We may naturally expect to find ourselves here in ill company: and certainly scurrilous Hipponax is of all Greek authors most akin to the Homeric Thersites. His traditional lameness may indeed be figurative only, as he certainly introduced a curious limp or drag into the iambic line, by lengthening the last foot regularly to a spondee. His ten-score surviving verses offer us an extraordinary

number of novel and evidently vulgar words. His exile from his native Ephesos, his extreme poverty, even to beggary, in Clazomenai, his virulent abuse of brother-artists and other men generally, could be illustrated from the same murky source. Out of such a mouth the general aphorism against womankind, uttered much in the tone of the elder Simonides, is no serious wound:

> "Two days are sweetest in a woman's life:
> When someone weds her—and her burial morn!"

The peculiar metre of Hipponax's lampoons was revived in Alexandrian times, and came to effective though intemperate use in the hands of a truer poet, the young Roman patrician Catullus.

ÆSOP.

(550 B.C.?)

Losing its bitterest tones, but retaining its tendency to satire, and rising a little above the earthy level to which the last two authors mentioned had dragged it, the iambic metre found a happier use in the animal-fable. The familiar name of Æsop, like that of Homer, has evidently been made to cover the productions of an entire school, perhaps even of many nameless wits and versifiers among the common people. Like Br'er Rabbit and his friends and foes, the animals of the Æsopic apologues are for the most part merely typical men and women, ill-concealed by the ass's hide or the lion's skin.

Curiously enough, some modern critics would fain make Æsop a negro, and explain his very name as a corruption from Ethiop. Herodotos, on whose good judgment we lean most confidently in literary questions, has no doubt as to Æsop's life, or at least his death, in Samos, about the middle of the sixth century before Christ. Yet his very existence is still questioned.

Herod., II., 134.

So striking a trait as his physical deformity is explained away, as the mere figurative ugliness of the homely satirist, or as the usual condition of the audacious jester at court or in common life.

That no sixth century Æsop versified the fables seems certain. We have Plato's high authority for believing that Socrates in prison, 400 B.C., turned into elegiac stanzas the tales then current, under Æsop's name, in prose. The version now extant is ascribed to a certain, or uncertain, Babrios of the first century A.D. Better known are the Latin renderings of Phædrus.

Plato, Phædo, p. 60.

The animal-fable as a satire on human action is, however, one of the oldest, farthest-extended, and, as it would seem, widest wandering forms of folk-lore. It is more than likely that its earliest home is India, where we find, in classical Sanskrit and other dialects, close parallels to many of Æsop's fables.

As was said, the iambic verse is the chief colloquial form in Attic tragedy and comedy, and there we shall next meet it. The trochaic metre is also ascribed to Archilochos as its inventor. This rhythm is said by Aristotle to have been more common than iambic in early tragedy. This assertion is supported to some extent by the texts of the oldest surviving dramas. But we turn now to the true lyric poetry, expressly intended to be sung, not recited.



CHAPTER XIV

BEGINNINGS OF GREEK MUSIC

Music played an important part in Greek life. To be sure, when general education, mental and physical, is described as composed solely of *Music* and *Gymnastic*, the wider functions of the Muses, including literature and all true culture, are really meant. Yet mere melody was often considered the true basis of youthful training. Nor is such a theory of education wholly antiquated. That a "Marseillaise" or a "Wacht am Rhein" may sway the character and fate of a race is a statement which might still find defenders. Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn" has been called the greatest single contribution to the cause of the North in our civil war. Mighty is he who makes the songs of a people.

Such modern illustrations, when offered here, recall to us our irreparable loss. Greek music vibrates no more in the memory of men. Our knowledge of it is, and will remain, scant, fragmentary, debatable. But we are assured that, especially in the centuries here discussed, while many an air was widely known as a Song without Words, there was hardly a lyrical stanza composed save with musical accompaniment. Doubtless far oftener, as is said to be true of Mr. Kipling's poetry, the melody was first created, and then was made articulate in words. It is, however, only a few fairly settled facts concerning music as the ally of poetry, especially as to instrumental accompaniment, that can be here brought together.

Both Homeric epics contain frequent allusions to *phorminx* and *citharis* or *cithara*, both stringed instruments, perhaps distinguished in name only. Certainly when the word *lyra* first occurs, it is a mere synonym for *cithara*. This is in the Hermes hymn, wherein is described the invention of the lyre by the baby god. The tortoise-shell actually continued to be the favorite sounding-board. A frame made from the wild goat's horns is also often represented on the early vases.

Homeric Hymns, ll., 423.

When Achilles was surprised in his cabin, at night, by the envoys of Agamemnon, he held in his hand a sweet-toned phorminx, "fair-wrought, with a silvern bridge." Therewith

> "He was cheering his spirit, and singing the glories of heroes."

Iliad, ix., 189.

In the Odyssey, Demodocos, the blind minstrel of Phaiacia, and Phemios, the reluctant harper in Odysseus's disordered hall, strike the phorminx as they sing lays, several of which are episodes of the Trojan story itself.

It was not until the early seventh century, we are told, that Terpander, a Lesbian musician, increased the strings of the lyre from four to seven, evidently to correspond with the notes of an octave. That this discovery had waited so long seems incredible. The migration of Terpander to Sparta appears to be connected with a great musical movement under Dorian leadership. It is to be remembered that the southward passing Dorians never wholly lost their influence over the Delphic oracle, where the god of the lyre was supreme. Crete, also, was both a centre of Dorian life and a very early home of the choral dance, song, and lyric music.

Compare supra, p. 56.

The pipes, or double flageolet, though the name, *auloi*, is good Greek, were accounted a Phrygian, or at any rate

Oriental, invention. The tale of Apollo with the lyre overcoming the satyr Marsyas and his pipes, in a musical contest, seems like a parable of some national struggle, artistic or martial. Ancient critics had noted that in the Iliad the pipes are heard on the Trojan plain, *not* in the Greek camp, but only among the Asiatic allies of the Trojans. They are mentioned in close connection with the lyre only in the scenes on Achilles's shield; another proof that this passage is a picture of Greek life far later than the feudal Homeric age. The tale that Athene discovered the pipes, and, when she saw her distorted face mirrored in a placid stream, flung them away where the satyr later picked them up, appears to be a late invention of Athenian jealousy.

Herod., VII., 26.

Xenophon's Anabasis, I., 2, 8.

Iliad, X., 13.

Iliad, XVIII., 495.

Though fully accepted among Greeks, the pipes never belonged to the calmer Apollo-ritual, but especially suited the dithyramb, which was sung in honor of rollicking Dionysos. This god is himself, in many a form of the myth, a half-welcome invader from the East.

In general the Greeks seem fully aware of their great debt to the Orient in this field. Of their three favorite musical "modes," the calm, dignified Dorian alone bore an Hellenic name, beside the ecstatic Phrygian and the enervating Lydian.

As has been said, poetry, when delivered in public, had almost always some musical accompaniment. In the recitation of epic, which was continued by the schools of professional rhapsodes down to Plato's time, the strings doubtless did little more than mark the time, and perhaps emphasize occasional striking passages. Much the same statement may be made of the pipes as used with most elegiac poetry, while the iambic movement is nearest of all to prose in tone and spirit.

We now come, however, to the true song and choral lyric, in which musical composition was doubtless considered the more important, while the text, if added at all, was somewhat in the nature of a modern opera-libretto. Yet even so the words were probably not lost in the music, but distinctly and audibly enunciated. In the drama, for instance, much is sung which the audience must hear and understand in order to follow the details of the plot. The singing and music appear to have been in absolute unison, all striking the same note together, unless men and women sang together exactly an octave apart. Yet these, like too many statements in the present section, are at best only fairly defensible theories, where facts are unattainable.

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The latest standard work is Monro's "Modes of Ancient Greek Music" (Oxford, 1894). Accounts of Greek musical notation may be found in the Harper Dictionary and Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities. The most important ancient essay is Plutarch's "De Musica." Our knowledge is recently increased by the discovery, especially at Delphi, of (late) Greek odes and music inscribed on stone. The subject is still a dark and debatable one.

CHAPTER XV

THE MONODIC LYRIC

THIS somewhat technical name designates a very small group of famous authors who composed songs intended to be sung by the artist himself, or at any rate by a single person, perhaps to the notes of his own lyre, possibly while the pipes were played by another. Our own poets usually first write out, and eventually print, their verses. Still, such phrases as "the singer," "the melodious strain," "chanted his lay," etc., constantly remind us of a very different and more natural condition, when the appeal was really made to eager ears and throbbing hearts. But while in so many ways the Greeks glorified the individual and disdained organized action, in music they preferred the united voices of a chorus, usually accompanied by dance or march. This tendency was no doubt powerfully fostered by the Dorians, to whom the loss of individual freedom in harmonized action was less irksome than to the vivacious Ionians.

Hence the poets mentioned in this section, though among the most famous in our entire list, are somewhat aside from the main story of choral lyric. It is probably also no accident that the most brilliant centre of this life is Æolic Lesbos. We are tempted, indeed, to begin with Thessalian Achilles and his silvern harp. Legendary Orpheus sang his own sorrows without human audience or companionship. Archilochos, certainly, is the very type of minstrel, wandering with lance and lyre. Mimnermos is even more a self-centred, self-conscious artist. Countless

other names must once have been familiar, each to a wider or a narrower circle. Yet, by general consent, Alcaios, Sappho, and Anacreon now form the especial lyric group.

More than almost any Greek land, the island of Lesbos retains all its traditional charm. The climate is ideal, never enervating, never inclement. The forests and hills, the streams and fields, amid which Chloe and Daphnis pastured their flocks and learned to love each other, are as beautiful as they can ever have been. All fruits and flowers are abundant and easily grown. Man himself seems more shapely, bolder, happier than in the other lands of Turkish misrule. Even the heavy brows and blue-black hair of "violet-tressed Sappho" are repeated in many a beautiful descendant.

Infra, p. 347.

Of the Lesbian cities, Mitylene, nobly set between two fine harbors and facing the Asian mainland, was in ancient times, and is to-day, the chief. More easily perhaps than in any other spot the imagination overleaps the gap of twenty-five centuries. The art-loving, musical, island-race, which in the first Olympiads sent forth a Terpander to be the father of choral lyric among the graver Dorians, seems to have been a folk even more emotional, impulsive, and ungoverned, than the Eastern Ionians. For a single generation their energies break out with volcanic force, and draw to them the eyes of the little Ægean world. Such a career, for man or people, is inevitably brief.

ALCAIOS.

(Circa 600 B.C.?)

At the end of the seventh century before Christ we suddenly descry the old and haughty nobility of Mitylene engaged in fierce strife against a series of tyrants, who won their power by force of arms and by the favor of the common

people. We hear especially the names of the cruel despots Melanchros and Myrsilos. A more settled and humane, but no less absolute, government was secured under Pittacos, best known as one of the seven sages. He, also, was of humble birth, and had to face the continued opposition of the old nobility. His reign was memorable enough to be immortalized in a snatch of folk-lore, a miller's song ·

> "Grind, mill, grind,
> For even Pittacos grinds,
> Of great Mitylene the king."

Both Alcaios and Sappho, or, as we should perhaps endeavor to call her in her own speech, Psappha, were both among the exiles of this troublous time. With the recall of the former, despite his stubborn and haughty opposition, is associated the noblest aphoristic utterance of Pittacos, most gentle of tyrants: "Forgiveness is better than vengeance."

The other traditions as to Alcaios only add to the general impression already given. Herodotos says he was fighting with his own people, against the Athenians, for the possession of Sigeion in the Trojan plain, when he left his shield on the field of battle, like Archilochos before him.

Herod., v., 95.

The very inadequate remains from Alcaios's ten books of verse neither prove nor gainsay his right to his high traditional fame. We have but morsels, from his hymns, scolia or drinking-songs, poems of passion and of strife. Composed in the little known Æolic dialect, even these are poorly transmitted to us by copyists who did not understand it. We see that he has much power in direct and vivid description.

Thus the best-known fragment gives us a glimpse into a splendid armorial hall, gleaming with bronze. Plumed helmets, Chalcidian swords, belts, and all the accoutre-

ments of war, glimmer before our eyes. From these he promptly turned to his real theme:

"These things must not be forgotten, when this task we undertake."

But here our citation is broken off. What was the true task of the completed ode? A stirring martial song in patriotic spirit may have duly subordinated all this light and color.

That he was a melodious master of style and phrase is clear. Both the favorite four-line stanzas, used so often by Horace, the Alcaic and the Sapphic, occur in his extant verses. Thus in a prayer to Hermes we may attempt a far-off echo of his Sapphics:

"Hail Cyllene's lord! for my heart doth bid me
Sing of thee, whom once in the sacred mountains
Maia bore, when wed with the son of Kronos,
Lord universal."

The Greek original seems to sing itself, but we know only the time, which is clearly $\frac{3}{8}$, or trochaic. The livelier form of quatrain which bears our martial poet's own name can hardly be made audible with English words. The best attempt is Tennyson's sonorous tribute to Milton:

"O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages."

These two measures are Horace's favorites. Some of the Roman poet's best touches are borrowed from the Lesbian, as for instance the whole ode on the ship of state, and the injunction on Thaliarchus to

Horace, Odes, I., 14, and I., 9, 5–8.

"Heap high the logs, drive out the cold,
And from the Sabine vintage old
A generous goblet fill."



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When Horace hears of Antony's fall, his seemingly spontaneous

Odes, I., 37, 1. *Nunc est bibendum*

is a careful revision of the fiercer Lesbian's cry:

"Now it is fit to be drunk, to quaff as we may,
Since Myrsilus is dead!"

The complete restoration of Alcaios and the other Greek lyrists might reduce the favorite of Augustus almost to the rank of a mere graceful translator and adapter of Hellenic fancies.

SAPPHO.

(Circa 600 B.C.)

A famous line of Alcaios runs:

"O violet-tress'd, pure, sweetly smiling Sappho,"

to which should be joined another fragment,

"Something I fain would utter, yet am checked
By shame."

And Sappho's response is also preserved.

"But if your wish were noble or virtuous,
If on your tongue naught ill had been quivering,
Then shame would not have closed your eyelids,
Fitting the words you would utter fitly."

This response, in the stanza which bears Alcaios's name, shows that the two great Lesbians lived in the same time, that Alcaios admired, perhaps loved, his greater rival, in whose verse appears an ethical quality which seems lacking in his.

We certainly prefer to believe only good of the most gifted among all poetic women. The poetess was of noble station,

and well beloved. There is evidence that she was a happy and devoted mother. Like Margaret Fuller she gathered about her a brilliant circle of women, who became her pupils, friends, and passionate lovers. Of her more intimate life, of her environment and time in general, we really know little or nothing.

The merciless gossip of later antiquity may have its source in naught better than Athenian comedy, or some forgotten ribald farce of a coarser people. That she was a favorite subject for comic plays is certain, and not strange. The Dorian, especially the Spartan women of her century, and of the more glorious age which followed, shared, as inferiors, the hardy exercises and rude intellectual training of their brothers. In Ionian lands respectable ladies were almost as secluded as among modern Turks. The flute-girls, dancers, and women generally who are seen in the vase-paintings at convivial gatherings with men, had hardly even the humble social rank of the modern ballet and variety troupe.

If Sappho really had the free social position, and fair name, of a Mrs. Browning, then the whole condition of society which in the Lesbos of her day made it possible, were forgotten in later Hellas, as our own happy freedom is not fully comprehensible, even now, to Spaniards—or to Greeks. Very much such liberty as our own we do appear to see in the Homeric age. Oriental influences, somewhat later, seem to have forced the women of most Greek clans into a harem-like seclusion, from which they have even now hardly escaped. The best praise Athenian Thukydides, ii., 45. Thukydides, or Pericles, can imagine for women in 430 B.C., is that nothing be said of them, whether good or ill.

It is more likely, however, that Sappho neither conformed to, nor could have understood, any such conventions as now lightly hedge us in. She is a poet of passion,

and if she drank the cup to the bitter dregs, as Catullus, Shakespeare, Burns, de Musset did after her, we are thankful for that artistic mastery to which full knowledge must usually make its contribution. We are not compelled to make a Christian saint out of the unseen, unknown artist of the beautiful.

A lover, Phaon, is mentioned in the fragments. The late and incoherent story of Sappho's hopeless passion for him, and desperate leap from the Leucadian cliff into the Adriatic Sea, has acquired a fame which it ill deserves. There was no such cliff, save as a place of execution. Greeks of Sappho's day did not wander willingly to the savage western seas. "All hope abandon ye who pass Malea," was the Ægean proverb. It is curious, finally, that no one who alludes to this silly tale has any sequel to offer. Whether the plunge freed the loving lady from her passion only, or from all life's woes, none tells us. We turn eagerly away to the only Sappho of whom we know anything, the artist.

It is no partial fancy of the Philhellene that a peculiar glow, a tenderness, an art perfected, yet not cold, but athrob with life, can be felt even in the single verses, the mere broken phrases, that echo still from Sappho's lost lyre.

"Lately to me Aurora golden-sandalled . . ."

begins—and, for us ends—a strain, and we would give a whole drama of Euripides for that one lost vision of her dawn.

"Pride not thyself upon the finger-ring."

What more? That the heart's love is better than all its outward marks? The doctrine would be true, however fatally misunderstood.

"Nightingale with voice of longing,
Harbinger of Springtide. . . ."

Surely this is Sappho herself, the first to utter fearlessly the needs of the lonely human soul.

"Evening, giver of all that shining morning has scattered,
Thou bringest the sheep, thou bringest the goat, thou bringest the child to the mother."

Scott, Byron, and many another, have echoed, prolonged, but not improved this strain.

"Happy bride, and happy he who weds her."

"Maidenhood, oh maidenhood, whither parting from me dost thou wander?"

Longfellow's maiden standing "with reluctant feet" utters no word quite so wistful.

"Beautiful this child of mine,
Like in shape to golden blossoms.
Nay, not Lydia's wealth for her,
Nor all lovely. . . ."

Every mother-heart can complete the measure.

"Sweet mother, I can weave no more,
Smitten now with love and longing
By the might of graceful Aphrodite."

"Set is the moon, the Pleiades:
Already is it midnight,
Past is the hour appointed—
Yet lonely I am lying!"

"Come, oh Cypris,
In thy delicate golden goblets
Mingle nectar for our banquets,
Prithee, and pour it!"

Love, wine, and golden luxury have always waked the lyre.

These utterances are distinctively feminine in their sensuous delicacy, they are in the forms of art, they are the voice of Nature. Here we have at last a singer who is not in any sense Homer's disciple, but inspired wholly from within. Pindar sings of youthful athletes, comparing them with fair young gods, and heroes semidivine, of the far off mythic world. Sappho's strains reēcho from the narrower changeless walls of the human heart itself.

The few Greek lyric poets of personal feeling—Alcaios, Sappho, and Anacreon—may yet be at least partially restored to us by capricious fortune, as was the other day Bacchylides. Of Sappho's songs and odes we may be sure the form will prove perfect, the harmonies of sound unrivalled. That a great wealth of thought and imagination will have been revealed is not so certain. Our maidenhood would perhaps still find in Adelaide Procter, our motherhood in Helen Hunt, our love of nature in Edith Thomas, a more familar and intelligible voice. There may even have been coarse, savage, ungenerous notes. But we prefer not to believe so, and there are none such among these baffling fragments.

Meanwhile a somewhat kinder fate has preserved one complete hymn of Sappho, and perhaps entire, or nearly so, a briefer love-confession. The former has been rendered many times, but the soft Sapphic strophe disdains our harsh consonantal words. The thought, at least, runs somewhat thus:

Aphrodite, glorious-thron'd, immortal,
Child of Zeus, enchantress, I do beseech thee,
Not with deadly woes nor with ills in spirit
Slay me, O goddess.
Nay, but come to me, if aforetime ever,
When my supplication afar thou heardest,
Leaving father Zeus' habitation golden
Hither thou camest.

Harnessing thy chariot. Lovely sparrows,
O'er our dark earth fluttering nimble pinions,
Down from Heaven, thro' the expanse of ether,
Easily drew thee.
Quick was their arrival, and thou, Benign one,
With immortal features upon me smiling,
Asked me what my sorrow had been, and wherefore
Hither I called thee;
What with frantic suit I again was craving.
"Whom dost thou desire that Persuasion," saidst thou,
"Gently lead to passion for thee, or who, oh
Psappha, has wronged thee?
Soon shall he pursue, though he now avoid thee;
He shall proffer gifts, though he now refuse them;
Though he love thee not, yet he shall right quickly
Love thee unwilling!"
Hither now once more by thy coming free me
Out of grievous sorrow: do thou accord me
What my spirit craveth; and still hereafter
Be thou my ally.

The simpler love-song has been imitated in Latin by Catullus. The measure is the same tender Sapphic stanza, which itself seems full of love-longing, with the sudden throb of hope midway in each line.

"Blest to me he seems as a god immortal,
He who face to face as he sits doth hear you
Sweetly murmur, listens in eager longing
Unto your laughter."

ANACREON.

(550–500 B.C.?)

The third famous song-writer was born at Ionian Teos, on the Asiatic mainland, probably migrated, with his whole people, to escape a Persian conqueror, and found a new home at Abdera; but spent much of his time at the courts of the two most famous of Hellenic tyrants.

The name of Polycrates, who accounted a beautiful signet-ring the greatest of his many treasures, and cast it fearfully into the sea in a vain attempt to avoid the Nemesis of good-luck, will always be honored among art-lovers, along with Roman Verres, who perished rather than give up his ill-gotten bronzes to Antony. He ruled Samos for at least ten years before his death in 522 B.C. Since Anacreon's verses were full of his name, as Strabo tells us, the poet doubtless made his home there for some time.

Thither Hipparchos sent a galley to bring the favorite of Muses and of men to Athens. We are reminded that the home of the arts is already shifting westward. An epigram of Anacreon on a Thessalian ruler, Echecratides, may indicate his final refuge. That he remained in Athene's city when Pisistratus's sons were driven forth is less probable. A new Athenian age was beginning, a time of strenuous effort, of peril by sea and land, of constitutional growth, of wider freedom, and even of painful beginnings in civic compromise. The lovable decadent poet of wine, of languid passion, of luxurious ease, could find many a more congenial abode than the city of Miltiades, Themistocles, and Aristides.

510 B.C.

Anacreon may really have served somewhere as a soldier just long enough to fling his shield away. He would have dropped it cheerfully, if only that he might echo the more soldierly brother-poets who had made a brave jest on that mortifying rebuff of Fortune. He was incapable of taking seriously either the good or ill of life.

Yet Anacreon's memorial statue stood upon the Athenian Acropolis. The Teians adorned their coins with the head of their most illustrious citizen. His name is imperishable: and this is no accident. He remains an exact expression for one side rather of human than of peculiarly Hellenic nature: the mere indulgence of sensual enjoyment.

The actual remnants of his poems are less copious, and also less ignoble, than would be supposed. Of all Greek lyrists his is the lightest touch. Nothing moves him to deep feeling or strenuous utterance. Sappho, among whose lovers he has been counted by the gossips, would surely have scorned such a trifler with things sacred; but there is apparently a safe gap of a generation or two between the twain. Anacreon's clear Ionic speech and simple trochaic measures are fitted to his themes; but the thought is so slight that it quite evaporates in an English translation, which needs rhyme to uphold it at all. The following example may be considered as a prayer, as a drinking-song, or as a love-appeal to a beautiful boy:

TO BACCHOS.

"Lord, with whom imperious Eros
Plays, and rosy Aphrodite,
And the blue-eyed nymphs,
Thou who over lofty summits
Of the mountains gladly rovest,
Unto thee I kneel.
To my prayer do thou be gracious:
Counsel wisely Cleobûlos,
Counsel him, O Dionysos,
To accept my love."

Anacreon meets the approach of age much as we should expect from his whole philosophy of life:

"Gray already are my temples, white hairs are my forehead's wreath.
Gracious youth abides no longer, outworn, even, are my teeth.

"From the pleasant span of life the hours that yet remain are brief.
At the thought of death I shudder, in my terror and my grief.

"Drear is the abyss of Hades, and reluctant our descent,
For we journey thither unto unreturning banishment."

The poet appears to have had a hale and merry old age, being choked at eighty-five by a grape-stone, as the legend somewhat too fittingly runs.

This is perhaps the best place to discuss also a group of imitative poems far more familiar to modern readers than the remains of Anacreon's own verse.

THE ANACREONTICA.

He who creates or perfects an art-type often stamps his name upon it as well. In such a sense, all songs of sensuous love and wine, down to Moore's own compositions, may be called Anacreontics. In this roll of sixty brief lyrics, first found collected in an anthology of the eleventh century A.D., there may be close imitations of lost originals from the master's own hand; but all are the product of later centuries than his. They probably vary greatly in age, one or two being so late as to sin gravely against the classical usages in rhythm and syntax. While Anacreon's genuine verse is often mentioned and quoted by classical authors, these poems are not alluded to until Aulus Gellius's time. He cites one, and makes the mistake, since so common, of crediting it to the Teian master himself.

140 A.D.

Gellius, xix., ix., 6.

These pseudo-Anacreontics vary in length from two lines to fifty. Though all too simple in rhythm and idea, often somewhat stiffly unoriginal, even pedantic, they hardly deserve as a whole Professor Jebb's severe epithets "lifeless" and "wooden." The master of the school is often named:

"Anacreon is honey-sweet,
And honey-sweet is Sappho."

The most striking of all is the little idyll of Eros knocking at midnight at the poet's door, and repaying his host

with a shaft from his unerring bow. Herrick, fittest of translators, has done justice to this.

Some poems have no doubt drifted into this collection merely because of their simple metrical form, or even by pure accident. "The Cicada" is a favorite, and has had many imitators, among them our own dignified Emerson, with his "Humblebee."

> "Happy, cicada, we count thee,
> As upon the highest tree-tops,
> When a little dew thou hast drunken,
> Sitting like a king thou singest.
> Unto thee are all things subject
> That amid the fields thou seest,
> That within the wood are growing . . .
> Precious art thou unto mortals,
> Sweet-voiced herald of the summer. . . ."

These are little better, however, than mediæval echoes from the lyric of living Hellas. We are far already from our proper theme.

The *monody* is clearly an Æolian treasure. Furthermore, even Alcaios may have been inspired by his friend, and certainly the other two Lesbian poets whom we know even by name, Erinna and Damophyla, are both women, and both lesser members of Sappho's intimate circle. No fragment of Alcaios or of Anacreon approaches her lofty pre-eminence in creative force and consummate grace. So this whole movement may perhaps be essentially the result of one woman's unique genius.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE RISE OF CHORAL LYRIC

THE great epics came down to the Greeks of the historical period, apparently, almost as to us, a rich, beautiful, inspiring gift, somewhat remote from the actual conditions of their life. If the splendid kingdoms of Homeric Mycenæ and her vassal states in prehistoric Hellas had ever been, certainly the invasion of the Dorians, or a similar convulsion, had swept them wholly away. Even of the great structures yet to be seen in ruins at Mycenæ itself, the ancient authors are silent, in some cases plainly ignorant.

The intellectual and artistic life of men began again to develop, almost as rudimentary as among real barbarians. The chief exception to this statement is the undying Homeric influence itself. Even in rustic and unhappy Bœotia its echoes are heard. We have seen also in the elegy a partial continuance of the epic measure, of its artificial dialect, in some degree of its spirit. So choral lyric, as developed chiefly among the Dorians, is not, after all, a slow, painful discovery of savages. In particular, aliens like Æolic Terpander from Lesbos, possibly Ionian Tyrtaios from Attica, brought the traditions of the heroic time, somewhat as, through the darkest ages of mediævalism, Virgil and Latin letters generally never wholly died out of men's memory in Italy.

But the Lacedæmonians themselves were a rude unimaginative little clan, encamped, almost like the present Turks, amid a subjugated and hostile folk of much larger

numbers, whom they ruled mercilessly, kept impoverished, decimated when it seemed safer. Their wars were usually made up of brief summer forays into Arcadia and Argolis. Hunting and athletics were their chief pastimes. No adequate sense of large Grecian unity had dawned on their sluggish, selfish minds. At best they had but a provincial conviction of their own physical superiority to all comers, perhaps with a far-away claim, to support it, on the legend of Menelaos and Helen.

In such a people, as among true savages, there was no leisure class, no room for mere sentiment or individual life such as Sappho or Anacreon represents. If they felt the need of a song-maker, a musician, a trainer of choruses, and imported him, it was for a definite public use.

That use had grown out of the need in which all organized life begins, from which all arts develop, viz., self-defence against hostile force. Music, song, rhythmic gesture and step, first unite to teach the most helpless of isolated animals to conquer by combined action. In other words, choral lyric is the oldest and most natural form of lyric poetry ; much older than such personal utterance as Sappho's : older, we believe, than any sustained epic like the Iliad.

The distinction between monodic and choral lyric is not a perfect or rigid one. Even Sappho, in an epithalamion, a dirge, a song for any public occasion, must have counted upon choral effects. On the other hand, there are passages in Alcman, perhaps even in Tyrtaios, which seem no less purely subjective and individual. Something like it we saw even in Hesiod. Certain poets it is hard to classify at all, but this is usually due to our scanty knowledge, as in Archilochos's case, for a Greek artist did almost always have a single well-defined sphere, within which fell his entire life-work. We may still say, sweepingly, that while the Æolic lyric is intensely personal, even to egotism, the

spirit of all Dorian life is collective, public, or, in terms of this particular art, choral.

The poets, treated as respected guests in Sparta, tinged their work with Dorian dialect, but probably did not use the broad local patois, which Ionians could hardly even understand. The early choral lyric, then, was only Dorian in a trebly qualified sense. Doubtless the copyists of later ages have gradually effaced many of the Doric words or forms. But even in Attic drama itself that coloring remains, most noticeably in the preference for the broad Italian ā, as heard in our word *father*. This sound is most sonorous, and is, too, in many words, the original vowel from which the other Greek dialects had diverged. *E. g.*, when in tragedy the Athenian poet hailed Athānā, not Athēnē, he was using not merely Dorian but also old-Athenian sounds.

It must be kept steadily in mind that out of this Dorian choral art grew Attic tragedy itself. While the actual dialogue in drama is a relatively late Attic innovation, the essential element, dramatic action, can be much earlier descried, and is often emphasized in the present section.

Over Thaletas, a lost poet, we need not linger. But this oldest teacher of music and poetry came, we are told, from Crete, probably from ancient Gortyna. Whether the Cretan art was native, and Doric, or borrowed from the Orient; and again, whether the pictures on Achilles's shield be Homeric or later, it is at least most interesting to find among them this attractive scene:

Iliad, xviii., 590-98.

"There was a chorus wrought by the glorious craftsman Hephaistos,
Like unto that which Daidalos once, in Knossos the spacious,
Skilfully trained for the sake of the beautiful-tressed Ariadne.
Blooming youths therein, and maids much courted, were dancing,

Each of them holding fast at the wrist to the hands of the other.
Lovely garlands the maidens wore, but the youths were accoutred
Each with a golden sword that hung from a baldric of silver."

The swords are significant. The maidens may have been originally but the booty of warriors, led by the wrist as captives. The armor-dance in Ares's honor is especially ancient in Crete. Already we seem to see an attempt at imitative action in the forms of art.

Strabo, p. 480.

Tyrtaios belongs partially here, but has been already mentioned. We know that the Spartans long marched to victory chanting his songs. A series of names must still be reviewed which will be chiefly mere reminders of our most grievous losses. Not one lyric poet can be fairly judged by his extant work.

Supra, p. 87.

ALCMAN

(650-600 B.C.)

Many brief fragments of this composer's work are preserved. They are in the Doric dialect, though Æolic as well as old Ionic forms are frequent. He calls himself a native of Sardis. However he reached Sparta, he was apparently given full citizenship there, and lived long enough to complain, most gracefully and melodiously, over the discomforts of age. In general, the few verses of his that remain are not at all such as we should expect. They abound in glimpses of natural scenery, in praise for feminine beauty, and even in tender love-poetry. This may be largely an accident of survival, as the chief fragments are from "Parthenia," or marching songs for maidens. In these was included, it appears, a lively lyrical

dialogue, and even saucy repartee. Yet the same poem began with a local myth, a tale of

"Castor and Polydeukes glorious,
The tamers of fleet colts, shrewd horsemen both."

Even Odysseus, Circe, Paris, Ajax, of the Trojan cycle, are elsewhere named by Alcman. But the tone of this lost lyre that will be best remembered is curiously like Goethe's "Nachtlied":

"Sleep holds the mountain peaks and the ravines,
The promontories and the watercourses,
Ay, all the creeping things that black earth breeds,
The beasts with mountain-lairs, the swarms of bees,
The monsters in the dark blue waters' depths:
And all the flocks of long-winged birds are slumbering."

A swifter movement seems indicated by such flashing lines as:

"Narrow the path and pitiless the need,"

or,

"Before the steel the sweet-voiced cithara comes."

But we cannot know adequately the poet who addresses himself, in not unseemly pride, much as our youngest master apostrophized his remoter birthplace in Bombay:

"No savage wert thou bred,
Dullard, from scholars far,
Not a Thessalian thou,
Nor sprung from shepherd stock,
But from the Sardian heights."

ARION

(Circa 600 B.C.?)

No genuine verse of this poet has come down to us. The famous tale in which he is flung overboard by the

this connection is at least as old as th
in which a mighty dolphin chases to
tans who are to be the guardians of t

Arion was a traveller, and friend of
He was by birth a Lesbian, though n
is, however, expressly called a "pup
said to have moulded the dithyram
in Dionysos' honor, into an orderly
at least, of this art-type is as old as
also costumed the chorus as satyrs, a
indeed be counted among the creat
this at once suggests the enacting o
career of Bacchos, lord of the satyrs a
"leaders in the dance" we hear of
can almost behold Dionysos himsel
chief among the capering children
new-invented dance. But all this is

STESICHOROS
(640–555 B.C.)

This poet's real name was Tisias, l
"chorus-arranger," has displaced
most effectively that the training of



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but—the bold opponent of the Sicilian tyrants. From the titles and scanty fragments it is clear that this poet really produced semi-dramatic pieces, with imitative acting and an intelligible plot. The performance was doubtless wholly by a chorus or dancing band, and they evidently only sang, never recited.

The most interesting title recorded is "Games at Pelias's Funeral": for we can imagine how such a scene could be represented by a large and well-trained chorus, without the need of dialogue. That the poetry of Stesichoros still remained essentially descriptive, not truly dramatic in form, is clear from the epigrammatic judgment of Quintilian: "He sustained on his lyre the burden of epic song." His subjects were largely Homeric, not without bold variations. Thus he is apparently the first who made Æneas migrate westward, to "Hesperia," which might mean either Sicily or the Italian mainland itself.

Quintilian, x., i, 62.

Plato in his "Phaidros" mentions the famous "Palinode." Stesichoros, it seems, had uttered some disparagement of Helen. She appeared to him in a vision, announced that he would be struck with blindness until he recanted, and reminded him of Homer's similar fate.

Phaidros, p. 243 A.

It is hard not to linger over this curious tale. *Our* Homer, at least, utters no rude word against Helen in his own voice, nor through the lips of any character save the fickle lady herself. The myth seems to show that she is already acquiring the supreme position which Goethe so clearly assigned to her, as the embodiment of the beautiful, of Hellenic art itself. Stesichoros promptly recanted, in no half-way words:

> "Nowise truthful is that tale:
> Thou in the well-benched ships didst never sail,
> Nor camest to the citadel of Troy."

The myths, we see, still remained plastic indeed in the fearless maker's hand. So, long afterward, Euripides "maligned" Helen, in many a tragic scene, yet finally composed his great dramatic "Palinode" to bear her name.

Infra, p. 231.

When we attempt to quote from this poet, our poverty would be amusing if it were not so pitiful.

"Another prelude now do I begin. . . ."

So much we hear, but not a word of either proēm. An invocation rings out:

"Poseidon, lord of hollow-footed steeds!"

or,

"O shrill Calliopeia, hither come!"

but the prayer is unheard, at least for us.

"When in the hour of Spring
The swallow's note doth ring"

is a simple touch of nature like Alcman's. But perhaps we may better turn down this tattered leaf with a sigh of the poet's own utterance:

"Most vain and fruitless for the dead to mourn."

Yet let us hope that some Egyptian papyrus roll may yet restore us at least one stately ode; perhaps the one which begins with full-voiced confidence:

"O Muse, disdaining warlike themes,
With me the marriages of gods now glorify,
Feastings of heroes, banquets of the Blest."

IBYCOS

(Circa 560 B.C.)

Ibycos, like Stesichoros an Italian Greek, like Arion a wandering minstrel, is almost, like Arion again, a lost voice. He, too, lives, or rather perishes, as the chief hero of

a romantic episode. A famous ballad of Schiller best preserves the tale. The favorite of the Muses, on his way to the chief national gathering, the Olympic games, is waylaid and slain. The only witnesses are a passing flock of migrating cranes. But in Hellas even murderous brigands are subject to the powers of harmony. At the great festival the Erinyes, the Avengers of sin, are represented tracking the guilty and announcing his certain detection. At the most awful moment a flock of cranes in full cry passes over the theatre. One of the brigands screams out in uncontrollable terror to his accomplice :

"See there ! see there ! Timotheus,
The cranes ! The cranes of Ibycos ! "

Arrest, inquisition, confession, vengeance, speedily follow. This tale of Schiller is really far more effective in detail than Plutarch's version.

Plutarch de Garrulitate 509 P.

Ibycos may have met Anacreon in the palace of Samian Polycrates. In character and in his art he belonged perhaps as much to the group of mere song-writers as to the larger line of choral and Dorian lyric poets. His few fragments are like Stesichoros's in elaborate metrical structure, but resemble the simpler measures of Anacreon in theme and spirit.

"Eros yet again from under purple lashes
Casting tender glances,
With his manifold enticements
Into the resistless meshes
Of the Cyprian, Aphrodite, draws me ! "

"In the Spring Cydonian apple-trees
Watered by the streams of rivers
Where the virgins' odorous garden is,
With the buds that under shadowy tendrils swell,
Grow and flourish."

These are sweet but not masterful utterances.

From Stesichoros the step to real drama seems short and inevitable. Something very like it may have existed even in his day. To us, however, it stands forth, the supreme triumph of the greatest among Hellenic cities and clans, in Attic tragedy and comedy only. Before we open that chapter we must discuss three illustrious contemporaries of Aischylos, in whom the possibilities of pure lyric culminate, and are apparently exhausted.

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We must again refer to Symonds, and to Professor Smyth's Melic Poets. The fragments of these poets are all extremely meagre, and no adequate knowledge of them is attainable.

CHAPTER XVII

SIMONIDES AND BACCHYLIDES

THE lives of the three last and greatest masters of choral song run from the sixth far into the fifth century before Christ. They all outlived the Persian wars, and saw the swift beginnings of that imperial power which Athens was to hold until the end of the century. They themselves witnessed, in the new metropolis, the creation by Aischylos and his rivals of an art-form much broader and more enduring than their own. Indeed, the very splendor of Attic song has doubtless dimmed our knowledge as to the later phase of the noble choral lyric, which culminates in this trio, and seems to us almost literally to perish with them. That they influenced Aischylos, and were in turn uplifted by his reverent and lofty spirit, is more than probable.

SIMONIDES

(556-468 B.C.)

Ceos, the little island birthplace of Simonides, is geologically a continuation of Attica. The two lands were inhabited by kindred Ionians. This poet and his nephew may serve to mark the transition of the literary centre eastward from the coast of the Ægean to the land of Athene.

Greek artists were a long-lived folk, if we can believe half the examples collected in a serious essay found among the works of the cynical Lucian. As late as the year 476 B.C., when the ten Athenian tribes held their annual contest, each with a chorus of fifty singers, the prize was as usual a tripod,

"Macrobioi," Lucian, III., 208-228.

which the victors publicly dedicated as a trophy. The inscription in three elegiac couplets, stating the simple facts, is extant. It closes :

"Glory Simonides won by teaching the song to the chorus :
Son of Leoprepes he : eighty the years of his age."

As was remarked before, it was to "train a chorus" that the master was employed. According to Suidas, the poet lived nine years longer.

The professional and so to speak mercenary character of Simonides's work has thus been already illustrated. Roving poets, often the favorites—sometimes also the heroic foes—of tyrants, we have met before now. Simonides was probably the first who set definite prices upon his *Encomia*, his *Epinikia*, or odes for winners in athletic contests, and similar eulogies much coveted by rulers or men of wealth. As compared with the life of Anacreon, for instance, whom Simonides doubtless met at Hipparchos's court, on a much earlier visit to Athens, this commercialism may only indicate a higher dignity in the artist. We ourselves still sell our verse, if we can: we honor Samuel Johnson because he declared his independence of patrons. There is in Pindar at least one rather scornful acknowledgment that his muse was mercenary. Naturally there was always the temptation to flatter the unworthy: a danger from which neither poets nor other human folk are yet wholly set free.

Pindar, Pyth. xi., 41.

To such charges we have an answer, perhaps from the poet's own lips, in a tale repeated by Cicero and others. After Hipparchos's fall Simonides seems to have sought more prosperous patrons among the Thessalian tyrants. The Scopadai, lords of Crannon and Pharsalos, were displeased because an ode, written in their honor, was largely devoted to the myth of Castor and Polydeukes. From those divine patrons the Thessalian

Cicero de Oratore ii., 86.

princes scornfully bade the singer claim his due reward. Just after this rebuff word was brought to the poet that two youthful strangers awaited him at the door. The instant he stepped out of the banquet-hall its supporting pillars fell, and all others, hosts and guests, perished in the ruins.

Later still in his long life we hear of Simonides as at least the occasional guest of the great Sicilian tyrants. Yet here again the chief incident recorded indicates his courage, his humanity, and his extraordinary personal influence. Hieron of Syracuse was at war with Theron of Acragas. The ties of kinship between them were close and manifold. Yet a pitched battle was just about to begin, when a lasting reconciliation was effected, including the recall of Hieron's banished brother, the immediate occasion of strife. The peacemaker was Simonides the poet.

Scholiast on Pindar Olymp., ii., 29.

But our knowledge of this long career, whether of the man or of the artist, is not sufficient for us to pass confident judgment upon him. He probably died at Syracuse, as Callimachos mentions his tomb outside the gates.

Simonides, as we have seen, like the younger masters, made a myth the centre of his lay. Its relation to the immediate event or person nominally celebrated may have been obvious, remote, or even questionable. Usually the hero of the myth was claimed as an ancestor of the hero of the day. This reminds us once more how essential the legendary past always remained in Greek literary art. We may regard it, yet again, as in some sense a survival of Homeric influence.

This elaborate structure of the great odes we have always been able to study in Pindar, and now we have also complete poems of Bacchylides. But while the fragments of Simonides's works are relatively far more copious than in the case of Stesichoros, mere fragments they still remain.

Pindar's senior by thirty years, he no doubt affected him powerfully. Again we deplore our poverty, not without half-suppressed yet eager hopes of treasure-trove yet to be discovered.

Plato knew and loved the calmer sententious Ionian poet, perhaps better than the more fiery and impetuous "Theban eagle." Thus the beautiful dialogue called Protagoras is largely built up about an eulogistic ode of Simonides to Scopas, possibly the one already mentioned. All the interlocutors in Plato's discussion know it by heart, and we get, eventually, at least the gist of one notable section. As restored with more ingenuity than certainty it runs, in part, thus :

> " Hard is it to become a good man truly,
> Foursquare in heart and hands and feet,
> Without a fault, complete.
> Methought not duly
> —Sage though he was—Pittacos' maxim ran :
> ' 'Tis hard," quoth he, ' to be a noble man.'
> Only a god that prize may win.
> Not wholly free is anyone from sin,
> For desperate disaster smites us still.
> Each man is virtuous in his happy hours,
> Evil in times of ill :
> So most the mightiest men, dear to the heavenly powers."

This certainly does not sound like ignoble adulation. Rather does it seem a part of a frank and bold apology for those set on high, exposed to grievous temptation, like the heroes of classic myth. But even here we are not in a position to judge between Simonides and the younger rival whom antiquity placed above him.

As was said already, the clear, keen, yet graceful style of Simonides was especially busy and successful in inscriptions and similar memorial records. Of the eighty "Epigrammata" transmitted under his name not all are from

his pen : yet enough are certainly genuine to make him easily first in this art, which is not unlike that of the gem-cutter, as contrasted with the larger task of them who build epics or cathedrals.

Thus the most famous, perhaps, of all epitaphs, is the elegiac couplet shaped for the three hundred Spartan heroes of Thermopylæ. It has grown even terser in the accepted rendering in English, by Bowles :

> " Go tell at Sparta, thou who passest by,
> That here obedient to her laws we lie."

With a more tender touch the poet lingers once more over the same memory. Again the somewhat free rendering of John Sterling defies rivalry :

> " Of those who at Thermopylæ were slain,
> Glorious the doom, and beautiful the lot ;
> Their tomb an altar : men from tears refrain
> To honor them, and praise, but mourn them not.
> Such sepulchre, nor drear decay
> Nor all-destroying time shall waste; this right have they.
> Within their grave the home-bred glory
> Of Greece was laid : this witness gives
> Leonidas the Spartan, in whose story
> A wreath of famous virtue ever lives."

Most famous of all was the pathos of this poet's dirges. A supremely good judge, the Roman Catullus, has a fine phrase :

Catullus, 38, 8. "Sadder than teardrops of Simonides."

From some such poem in the minor key came the famous picture of Danaë and her babe set adrift to perish. With Mr. J. A. Symonds's sympathetic version of this fragment we may turn regretfully away from one of the

world's great masters in calm, good taste and artistic finish.

"When, in the carven chest,
The winds that blew and waves in wild unrest
Smote her with fear, she, not with cheeks unwet,
Her arms of love round Perseus set,
And said: O child, what grief is mine!
But thou dost slumber, and thy baby breast
Is sunk in rest,
Here in the cheerless brass-bound bark,
Tossed amid starless night and pitchy dark.
Nor dost thou heed the scudding brine
Of waves that wash above thy curls so deep,
Nor the shrill winds that sweep,—
Lapped in thy purple robe's embrace,
Fair little face!
But if this dread were dreadful too to thee,
Then wouldst thou lend thy listening ear to me;
Therefore I cry—Sleep, babe, and sea be still,
And slumber over our unmeasured ill!
Oh, may some change of fate, sire Zeus, from thee
Descend, our woes to end!
But if this prayer, too overbold, offend
Thy justice, yet be merciful to me!"

BACCHYLIDES

(505–435 B.C.?)

Simonides's last years were spent, in part at least, in Sicily, at the courts of the great tyrants, Hieron of Syracuse and Theron of Acragas. The poet's nephew and disciple Bacchylides was perhaps with him for a time. Pindar, also, was a star in the same galaxy. Like most students, we are reluctantly forced to the belief that certain passages of Pindar's odes, betraying a gnawing and unworthy jealousy, refer to this kindred pair of rivals. He emphasizes especially his own creative and all but effortless genius,

compared with those who by painful effort and theoretical art produce inferior results. The clearest allusion is in the second Olympian ode, written for Theron in 476 B.C. The use of the dual number points the personal reference.

Pindar, Ol., 2., 94-98. "He is the master who by nature knoweth well.
They that from study learn,
A pair of quarrelling crows,
Scream vainly at the bird divine of Zeus."

The antithesis, here emphasized, between nature and art, is not wholly groundless. Pindar does not actually forget, or break, the vital laws of form, though Horace himself asserts that he does. Nor are the Ceian lyrists uninspired or uncreative. Yet it is true, that in Bacchylides we always realize the finish, the perfection of form: with Pindar we are hurried along the crested billows of his impetuous imagination.

The best modern comparison is perhaps to the two great masters of serious drama, of whom so few men can heartily enjoy both, as Lessing did. Racine has much true poetic force, Shakespeare is perfectly familiar with all the needs and limitations of the stage. Yet the one constantly, the other never, reminds us of conventions and bounds. The superiority of "nature" over "art," then, we may finally concede, but not without much reservation. All great masters are heavily indebted to both: they should disdain neither.

Twenty poems of this author, most of them somewhat mutilated, were discovered in an Egyptian roll of papyrus, and first published in England in 1897. In our delight at the partial restoration to us of Bacchylides's odes we are tempted to assign undue importance to this sweet-voiced, exquisite, easily understood minor poet. He is most helpful as a standard by which we may measure Pin-

dar's work, and better surmise how much of it is purely original, how much the tradition of his guild. The superior force and splendor of the Theban cannot be questioned, least of all when the two celebrate the same subject, though it be but the success of a tyrant's favorite race-horse. It is curious that fourteen of the twenty newly discovered poems, like all those of Pindar extant, are epinikia: poems in honor of victories in the games.

Pindar, Olymp., i.; Bacchyl., v.

We must remember that Bacchylides comes relatively late: that from boyhood he was undoubtedly acquainted with the splendid triumphs of the earlier Æschylean tragedy. Hence any such strong dramatic element as we find in some of these poems cannot be safely ascribed to the purely lyric art and inspiration of the previous century. If ever even a single ode of Stesichoros shall lie entire before us, our judgment on the whole lyrical epoch will be far clearer.

In Bacchylides, as in Pindar, we find an elaborate stanza invented for each ode, plainly indicating that the musical accompaniment was then, as it is still in modern opera or oratorio, created afresh for each piece. The usual arrangement is in triads, *i.e.* the first stanza or "strophe" is followed by another of the same metrical form, the "antistrophe." Then comes a new series of verses, the epode. This entire complex is then repeated (aab, aab, etc.), from two to thirteen times. The latter number occurs in the longest of Pindar's epinikian odes, the fourth Pythian, which is almost a miniature epic, reciting the tale of the Argo. No other extant ode exceeds *five* triads, or fifteen stanzas.

Bacchylides's epinikian on the victory of Pherenikos, Hieron's saddle-horse, in 476 B.C., has already been alluded to. In the first pair of strophes Hieron is reverently greeted, and the poet discreetly adds :

"Thou best of living men wilt know aright
The glorious gift of Muses violet-crowned."

The composer does not hesitate to compare himself, in Pindar's favorite metaphor, to the wide-ranging eagle among the shrill lesser birds. Indeed we may hear a note of more lingering self-consciousness than Pindar's in the phrases:

"This hymn a stranger from an island most divine
To thine illustrious city sends:
Of golden-coronalled Urania
A liegeman he illustrious."

The myth, which begins abruptly in the third triad, runs on into the fifth, and tells us a new tale of Meleager and Heracles, meeting in the under-world. If there was a close and special fitness to the conditions of Hieron's days, it is no longer obvious to us.

Dropping the myth as suddenly as he began it, the poet rather hastily makes his farewells:

"Check here thy car, white-armed Calliope.
Sing thou of Cronos' offspring Zeus,
Leader of gods Olympian,
And of Alpheios that unwearied flows;
Of Pelops' might, and Pisa, where
Illustrious Pherenikos won
With nimble feet a victory in the race,
And brought to tower-crowned Syracuse renown,
To Hieron a wreath of happiness."

It may be that Pindar's first Olympian has been too long familiar in its splendor unapproached. Certainly, to us, this rich-worded song often rings false, much as when a graceful lesser Alfred essays a laureate ode, after him who buried the great duke and welcomed the Princess Alexandra. Especially as to the myth the young Cean appar-

ently feels compelled to lift a mace he cannot wield to any adequate effect, and gladly drops betimes.

Much more delightful is a group of half a dozen poems, so novel in form that we really do not know whether to classify them as dithyrambs, or under some other title. They are highly dramatic in quality, several are actually lyric dialogues. It is no accident that two of the six are too peculiarly and intimately Attic to have been originally performed anywhere else than in the land of Theseus and Aischylos. In each of the six a myth fills the chief or the entire space. Several of these tales are quite new to us as a whole or in their minor features.

Bacchyl., xv-xx.

xvii, xviii.

Especially interesting is the vivid and comparatively new scene from Theseus's most famous adventure. Minos on shipboard, taking to Crete Athens's tribute of youths and maidens for the ravenous Minotaur, attempts to embrace one of the girls. Prince Theseus fearlessly reminds him that they are sent to perish, but not to be insulted. Minos, scornfully raising his hand heavenward, successfully calls on Zeus to assure him of his sonship by a peal of thunder. Then, flinging a ring into the sea, the Cretan king bids Theseus prove with equal certainty his claim that Poseidon is his sire. The prince straightway plunges in, and returns from the palaces of the deep—doubtless with the ring, though it is not again mentioned, but also—with a royal and paternal gift, a robe of purple. This tale, till now almost unknown save from vase-paintings ill understood, wins for Bacchylides our hearty gratitude: though we hardly suppose it is in its essential features his creation.

xvii.

The style and expression of Bacchylides are almost as clear as Longfellow's. He resembles Pindar chiefly in his rich vocabulary, most of all in the picturesque compounds which both apparently coined with utmost freedom. Some

passages, such as were cited above, look like direct imitations of Pindar, but both poets may be following models earlier still. Altogether, Bacchylides adds one of the pleasantest chapters to our subject, and increases our sense of grievous loss in the general field of lyric.

CHAPTER XVIII

GREEK ATHLETICS

As we approach Pindar this subject seems to demand special treatment. The revival of athletic sports in America, and indeed thoughout the world, does not even yet make intelligible to us the intimate relation of such contests to Greek social life, politics, and religion. Yet the enthusiastic veneration shown by our college boys for the master athlete and prize winner is at least a partial key to the riddle.

The Greeks were intense lovers of life, of healthy, vigorous youth and its pleasures. We, especially the Puritan strain of Anglo-Saxon stock, are a less joyous, perhaps a more contemplative people. Hebraic teachings, and mediæval asceticism, have bidden us regard this life as a painful and dangerous transition to one infinitely more important. The mortification of the flesh, the sinfulness of pleasure, had never been preached to the folk of early Hellas. It must be conceded, too, that their ethical nature was less prominent than their imaginative and intellectual activity. Like our boys again, they might be thoughtlessly brutal, though not often consciously cruel.

As to the divine natures, the early Hellenes certainly had no lofty revelation. Their gods craved what men desired, and seized it with longer arms, with more insatiate thirst. To such men, and such gods, manly strife was of all things most acceptable. The victor had fairly won the prize and glory ; the loser, if he saved his life, must slink homeward with scant sympathy, indeed thankful to be



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ignored. Only to brighten the victor's festival does Pindar mention that

Pythian, v., 47.

"'Mid forty fallen charioteers didst thou
Undaunted guide thy car unharmed."

Greeks loved wealth, with the luxury and the power it brings. Therein they were merely human. But they also craved, with a more than Gallic eagerness, lasting personal distinction. They never dreamed of such reward as "Nirvana," of oblivion, of absorption into the oversoul. Heracles, their chief athlete, is immortal on the masculine side. He wins a seat in the Olympian council hall, wedlock with Hebe (Youth), eternal fame: and doubtless often sighed for foemen worthy of his human thews and sinews, from which his reluctant spirit had parted on the funeral-pyre. Hence a double or astral body of his appears also in the Homeric under-world—a world which was but the pallid renewal of earthly conditions and employments.

Odys., xi., 602 ff.

The twenty-third book is at least a very early supplement to an earlier Iliad. It is by comparison very mature and intensely thoughtful in tone. In the midnight converse with Patroclos's ghost the youth-time of Achilles passes him by. The future yawns before him:

Iliad, xxiii., 69–81.

"'Art thou asleep, and wert thou forgetful of me, O Achilles,
Now that I am dead, who in life wast never neglectful?
Bury me now in haste, that I pass by the portal of Hades.
Now am I banished afar by the souls, the ghosts of the perished.
They forbid me beyond the River among them to mingle.

"'Never may I return, when of fire my meed thou accordest.
Never as living men may we sit, apart from our comrades,
Weaving our counsel: for me hath yawned that destiny grievous

Which at the very hour of my birth for me was appointed.
Even for you, O Achilles like to the gods, it is fated
Here to meet your death, by the wall of the valorous Trojans. . . .'"

Yet the funeral rites which fill nearly all the rest of this book are athletic contests, held in honor of the dead chieftain. These games include chariot races, but not the later contest of saddle-horses. Horseback riding was known to the Homeric men only as a rare acrobatic feat. The mourning Achilles stanches his tears to become chief umpire and dispenser of prizes.

Other nations, even, were imagined as much the same in their ideas. Hector was undoubtedly buried with similar rites. Certainly the Trojan legend itself was full of such contests, and over Anchises's Sicilian tomb even Roman Virgil ordains an elaborate imitation of Achilles's games. So when the wayworn Odysseus is entertained in the Phæacian land, the Prince Laodamas in the midst of the sports says to the unknown guest:

Æneid, Book V.

Odys., viii., 145-48.

"Come thou, stranger, my father, do thou too try in the contest:
If thou art skilled in any: one should be with contests familiar,
Since, whoever he be, for a hero no glory is greater
Than whatever with hands, or again, with his feet he accomplish!"

Laodamas's bad manners are fittingly reproved, but the sentiment is not questioned, and the challenge, on its sharper repetition, is accepted with vigor and brilliant success. The hero who pitches a heavy discus far beyond all the records is quite the same man who, a few days later, alone can bend his mighty bow, and does to death the lawless suitors of his wife. The Homeric Greeks, and

those of historical times, felt that athletic competition, like hunting—in which also Odysseus had distinguished himself—made the best preparation for "man-ennobling battle," of all games the most glorious. The doctrine is heard again to-day, from the highest seat in the land. It is a part of the theory of the strenuous life. For every such eulogist of physical prowess Pindar is full of comfort:

Olymp., vi., 9–11.

"Deeds without danger wrought
Neither in hollowed ships nor among men
Are honored: but if aught
Of glory be thro' peril sought
Many remember then."

But there was another Greek trait, to which we as yet can lay little claim. With their intense enjoyment of life, their admiration for the beauty of manly vigor and its earthly environment, there was a widespread desire to reproduce, to eternalize, that fleeting loveliness. When we see the delicate beauty of the mere handworker's output, not of carven gem or inlaid sword alone, but even of the earthen pot, or mere hewn stone from the city wall, we say, in our haste, that all men in Hellas were lovers of beauty, even artists. And at least, ugliness, or heavy-handed crudeness in any craft, was a thing to be ridiculed, detested, thrust mercilessly out of sight. Even the personal defects of Thersites are held up to scorn, along with his rash tongue and helpless hands.

Above all, the youthful male figure, quite undraped, seemed to the Greeks a thing supremely beautiful. Many a living sculptor to-day will perhaps say, in quiet personal chat, almost the same. Even our youths adore the bulging muscles of the manly athlete, and look on with supercilious amusement while the girls play basket-ball. Behind the Greeks lay neither Christian teachings of equality nor any traditions of chivalry.

Woman was to them an inferior, indispensable indeed, but only as the bearer of the man-child. The wife was not even a sharer in the lighter diversions of men. To the banquet came only the despised flute-players and dancing-girls, the playthings and the property of men. The true social club was the gymnasium or youths' palæstra: and here nothing feminine appeared at all.

In Sparta, perhaps in Dorian lands generally, ladies had a larger share in athletic training, apparently also greater social freedom and personal power. But the Dorians are the negative, the heavier, as it were the Roman side of the Hellenic stock. Their contribution to the lasting and stable life of their race may have been very large; their visible share in the peculiar Greek genius and its gifts to us is certainly small. In any case, our knowledge in this direction is slight and fragmentary.

Most of what has been said here of the Greek nature is alike true of the epic ideals and of actual Ionic life in the fifth century before Christ. In the Iliad and Odyssey, however, the women, at least royal princesses—almost the only women whom we meet in the Homeric world—seem quite free and independent.

In the Iliad again, Greek art is in its infancy. But when, early in the fifth century before Christ, the poets Pindar, Bacchylides, and Aischylos appear on the scene, Greek sculpture and architecture are already striding rapidly toward the triumphs of Phidias and his successors. Doubtless pillared temples, wayside shrines, glimmering statues, already dotted each dale and hillside of Hellas.

Though the trophy given officially at the time of victory to the winner at Olympia had usually no material value, yet by his townsfolk almost any prize or privilege was too little for him who had done such honor to his native city. Against these excessive rewards for merely physical superiority a philosopher, or even a poet, sometimes raised a

bold protest. Yet the overwhelming sentiment disregarded such isolated voices.

The ways of Olympia—which preserved for us our one unquestionable masterpiece of sculpture, Praxiteles's Hermes and infant Dionysos—were once lined and bordered with statues of athletes who had been victorious in the quadrennial games. Shrines, temples, and monuments of every kind were erected in the same spirit of eager thankfulness. As to painting we have less knowledge. It may have been still the handmaid of its two sister-arts. Hymns to the helpful gods, which were no less tributes to the prowess of the champion, with text, instrumental and vocal music, composed by the greatest masters of the art, resounded along the stadion and in the close of Zeus's great temple, before the victor's train began the jubilant homeward return. That journey was one long triumphal procession, often shared by the artists of every guild, who were to create equally precious memorials in the happy home-city.

We cannot wonder that, under such conditions, the venerable and divinely ordained Olympic games were accounted the greatest stimulus to national Hellenic feeling. Hither the free-born Greek could come for the contest, from any corner of the Mediterranean world. Zeus, the supreme deity of the Hellenes, was the chief guardian of the holy place. A Truce of God suspended every public war or private feud for the time. All forms of trade, as of culture, found here a centre and an exchange. Even the legend that Herodotos brought his history hither is not incredible, though he could not have read, in public, a tithe of the long roll. All men came to Olympia as pious pilgrims to Zeus's shrine. So the games held in the valley of Crisa, under the brow of Delphi, were a most essential and acceptable part of the Apollo-cult. In both

places the Dorian influence, especially that of Sparta, was persistent.

The early decades of the fifth century were above any other epoch a time of proud national consciousness and of unbounded expectancy. The defeat of Xerxes's invading millions, gathered from all Asia, was felt to be a miracle, proving that the Greeks were the chosen people of their gods. During that unequal struggle the chief rivals, Athens and Sparta, had worked hand in hand. The jealousy between them, destined to convulse and enfeeble all Hellas, and to make the century infinitely tragical in its close, was hardly felt. Apparently the danger was fully realized by no one in Pindar's day, unless perhaps by the far-sighted Themistocles. Upon the monumental tripod set up, after the victory of Platæa, at Delphi, and still to be seen where Constantine placed it to decorate his capital, twenty-nine other states are recorded as sharers with Sparta and Athens in the glorious strife. The Sicilian tyrants, even, had offered their services, though on impossible terms of supreme command. Furthermore, in the same campaign, if not, as tradition declared, on the same day, their united forces had gained in Sicily a decisive victory over a mighty host of Carthaginian invaders, so that Greek national life, and freedom from Persian or Phœnician despotism, were assured at once in the eastward Ægean and in the lovely Hesperian island.

Lasting peace, indeed, or true national union, was destined never to be attained. Dorian and especially Corinthian jealousy of Athens's swift rise may have been active from the first. Yet to-day men forget their warmest political and religious differences in public worship, in the centres of trade, in the enjoyment of grand opera or Shakespearean drama, in the fraternal reunion of a college commencement. To a Greek such occasions as the Olympic

or Pythian games were in some sense all these, fused in an enthusiasm which our calmer natures rarely show.

It is probably no accident then, nor even wholly regrettable, that Pindar is, for us, the poet of eighty epinikian odes, and almost nothing more.

CHAPTER XIX

PINDAR

We have been taught, chiefly by the unneighborly Athenians, and possibly, too, by querulous Hesiod, to regard the Bœotians as sluggish boors, dwelling under a sullen sky. Indeed it is only twice in the story of Hellas that their genial and fertile land, well beloved in later days by gentle Plutarch, becomes the centre of interest. The lyre of Pindar has perhaps left a more lasting impress than the sword of Epaminondas.

One powerful chord the poet must feel within him that he may strike it in others: the love of home. When he himself, or his song, had grown a thrice-welcome guest at every ruler's hearth, and in every free city of Grecian speech, Pindar asserted:

Pindar, Fragm., 180.

"Not an alien unfamiliar with the Muses
I in famous Thebes was bred."

His exact birthplace was the suburban hamlet of Kynoskephalai. His local attachment matched Sophocles's love for Colonos and for Athens. The seven-gated city of the Oidipus-myth, the tale of the two founders, Amphion and Cadmos, the storied fount of Dirke, all gain new glory from Pindar's verse.

For cramming into an opening stanza in a youthful hymn allusions to a dozen such mythic memories, Pindar was wittily admonished by his teacher and successful rival, the poetess Corinna: "We should sow with the hand, and not with the whole sack." For the various arts which were united in his

Plutarch, De Gloria Atheniensis, p. 348.

high public function he had as teachers the best masters of the time. Even a Pindar must have other instruction than Nature's. Among his less successful rivals was another Boeotian lady, whom Corinna chides, with charming feminine inconsistency:

"Myrtis still by me is censured,
Though her song is clear and sweet,
That, a woman born, she ventured
Against Pindar to compete."

We get an impression that Pindar's was but one of many musical voices in the Theban land. Certainly his genius was at once appreciated. He was barely twenty when a Thessalian boy named Hippocleas, of very noble parentage, won the quarter-mile race in the quadrennial games near Delphi. The Aleuadai, tyrants of Larisa, and perhaps this lad's kinsmen, ordered to be composed and sung in his honor a "hymn" or ode, which is now preserved as the tenth Pythian ode of Pindar. Thus was struck the key-note of a full and glorious career, sixty years long.

Refusing to attach himself permanently to any tyrant's court, however splendid, Pindar maintained his Theban citizenship and professional independence. A haughty aristocrat, he felt fully the duty *noblesse oblige*. Thus to Hieron of Syracuse, the mightiest Greek ruler of his day, Pindar speaks almost as an equal, not without a covert warning:

Olymp., I. ad fin.

"Men in various paths are great:
By kings the crest supreme is won: look not beyond.
Be thine aloft to tread thy space of time,
Mine ever with the victors to commune,
Myself among Hellenes everywhere
For skill in song illustrious."

As we should expect, he appears to have attended frequently the national games, especially at Olympia and at

neighboring Delphi. Though the phrases used in his poetry must often refer to the song only, and not to the singer, yet he probably did visit freely also the homes of his patrons, such as the Sicilian capitals Syracuse and Acragas, the lovely isle of Rhodes in the Ægean, even remote Kyrene on the African coast. Certainly the glimpses accorded us by him at these and many other famous and beautiful cities of the Hellenic world, give the impression of keen eyesight and personal familiarity.

Doubtless wealthy by birth, there was hardly a limit to the rewards he could exact as the price of song-given fame. Long after his death, at the special feast of Theoxenia (Hospitality) at Delphi, the sacred herald used to proclaim: "Let Pindar pass in to the banquet of the god!" Among the artist's patrons was an Alexander, King of Macedon. Much later, in evil days, when a greater namesake of that monarch sacked contumacious Thebes, he still "bid spare the house of Pindarus." Such a life, in such an age and folk, seems peculiarly full and happy. Yet there lay across it one black shadow, which perhaps was never wholly lifted.

Arrian, Anabasis, I., 9.

When the Athenians marched out to meet and repell Darius's Persians at Marathon, no allies crossed their northwest frontier, save a thousand shields from brave little Platæa, ever threatened by imperious Thebes, and often dependent on Attic protection. Again, a decade later, from the list of patriotic states inscribed upon the Delphic tripod Thebes is dishonorably absent. Misled by jealous hatred for Athenian democracy, hopeless, no doubt, of successful resistance on the Grecian side, the Cadmean oligarchy had drawn their city over into Xerxes's alliance, though many exiles and fugitives of Theban birth probably fought under Pausanias's standard.

Even Pindar appears to have quailed in that supreme crisis, and prayed only that man or god might arise

"To hold in check the common folk,
And seek the shining face of glorious Peace."

Polybius, iv., 31. Polybius censures severely this weakness of our poet. Yet he was prompt, at least, with his greeting to the protagonist of Hellenism triumphant:

"O violet-garlanded, resplendent, sage-revered,
Bulwark of Hellas, illustrious Athens!"

The fine imposed by narrow-hearted Thebes upon her far-sighted poet, the larger recompense from Athens in gold, an honorary citizenship even in a state of bronze, may be in part a growth of later legend. At least, the words of the seventh Isthmian throb with the bitterness of the poet's sorrow amid the nation's joy.

"Sorrow my spirit fills,
Now bidden on the golden Muse to call.
Yet, freed of mighty ills,
Let us not into crownless desolation fall,
Nor nurse our grief;
But having eased us of evils desperate,
We to the folk will proffer sweet relief
After their bitter toil of late,
Because the stone of Tantalos that o'er us lay,
To Hellas an intolerable curse,
Some god hath turned away."

Yet these words, uttered when Thebes herself was most abased, are the unmistakable voice of a truly national poet. From him we would wish to have a song of deliverance, exultant as Miriam's over the drowned Egyptians. No wonder is something of envy mingled with his admiration of Aischylos, a kindred spirit, across the mountain barrier which was so often fatal to the larger Hellenic patriotism.

To Pindar, then, even as the lyric artist, Fate has not, perhaps, been wholly kind. Of course there are victories,

in war or peace, more worthy of poetic immortality than fleetness of foot in horse or man. The ethical, the spiritual nature was nowise lacking in him, and had indeed been wondrously quickened in the Hellenic folk of his generation by that marvellous escape from the Median avalanche. But in the epinikian odes these nobler sentiments are usually reduced to their lowest terms, appearing as brief far-glancing apothegms. In such jewels of thought, two, three or five words long, Pindar's poetry is probably richer than any other. We could cull a hundred, but a handful must suffice :

"Even over sea the eagles fly."
"By noble joys an alien pain is quelled."
"Pathless, to fools or wise, what lies Beyond."
"A man of valorous deeds broods not on death."
"Their nature neither the red fox nor roaring lions change."
"Unto one doom in time
The ever-varying breezes blow."

But often these flashing truths are evidently just the words which his audience of the moment least desired to hear. Not rarely they ring like bold warnings, even to the mightiest of men. The myth, which we have seen growing to be a traditional requirement in every such composition, is seemingly used at times in the same daring fashion. On the other hand, even Pindar's wings often droop, while he perforce renders a complete list of the prizes already won by the victor of the day and his kin.

Most frequently noted is Pindar's splendid imagery. Here his wealth of words enables him to use many times over a rather small number of familiar natural phenomena. The flash of lightning, of sunbeam, of star or of gold, the eagle's or the arrow's flight, with other impressions of swiftness and dazzling splendor, recur in every ode. This

detail of his art can be studied with perfect accuracy, and much profit, even in a prose translation. A notable accumulation of such metaphors fills the first stanza of the first Olympian—an ode which has evidently won its prominent position by its large treatment of the chief local myth, the tale of Pelops.

"Water is best, and gold,
Like fire by night that flames,
Mid lordly wealth is eminent.
But if of prizes thou
Art fain, dear heart, to tell,
Seek not another star
More warming than the sun,
Shining by day athwart the lonely air,
Nor will we speak of greater than the Olympic games."

Pindar is less generally known than any other great Greek writer. We might almost say, as Voltaire did of Dante, he will always be praised, and never read. There are several Greek authors of much greater influence on later literature, and in that sense more important. We are apt, also, to think of Attica as the soul of Greece, and Athene's chief interpreter, certainly, was born amid the nightingales and olives of Colonos. But if we truly wish to know—not indeed the common life, but—the ideal and artistic spirit of Hellas as a whole, in her happiest generation, no means save an intimate study of Pindar's odes will suffice.

It is not an easy or a painless task. We move usually amid a throng of ghosts; we hear names which call no faces to our imagination. Each goodly palace and pillared temple has crumbled to ignoble ruin. The harmonies of his march and dance have died away forever. If they who love music best will imagine a student in New Zealand or Samoa, thousands of years hence, struggling with dictionary and notes to *read* a mere libretto-text of our great operas or oratorios, it will be a fairly parallel case. And

yet, even so, Wagner, at least, would remain a true poet. Pindar is a much greater one.

A simpler verse of some humbler singer — Catullus, Béranger, Heine, or Burns—may reach the source of tears more easily; but among the bards sublime, the masters of the loftiest style, Pindar has a unique position. We cannot afford to ignore the gift he offers us so confidently:

Olymp., vii., ad init.

"As he that with a lavish hand a cup doth lift
Plashing with dew of grapes within,
And proffers it, a gift,
To him who newly with his child is wed:
A pledge from home to home 'tis sped,
All-golden, of his treasure the most choice,
Wherewith the banquet shall rejoice,—
And honors so his kin,
Because the youth is made among his friends
Envied for marriage that such largess sends,
So I the outpoured nectar which the Muses gave,
Sweet fruitage of the poet's soul, my lay,
Sending to them that bear the prize away,
Honor the heroes brave
Who at Olympia and Pytho win."

Much in Pindar needs annotation. As to many allusions, we must still remain in the dark. When he is really difficult, however, it is less often from any subtlety of thought than from his sudden shifts of figure and rapidity in general. As he puts it:

Olymp., ii., 91-94.

"Under my bended arm
Many a missile fleet
Within my quiver lies.
Unto the wise they speak:
But to the multitude
They lack interpreters."

Here follow the winged words against a pair of rivals, Supra, p. 139. cited before. Clearly he expected the personal allusion to be understood: by someone.

Even in the midst of these Epinikians Pindar, to all appearances, breaks away at times altogether from his allotted task. For instance, there is in the second Olympian a picture of the next world deeply tinged with Pythagorean mysticism.

"But in the happy field of light
Where Phœbus with an equal ray
Illuminates the balmy night
And gilds the cloudless day,
In peaceful, unmolested joy,
The good their smiling hours employ.
Them no uneasy wants constrain
To vex the ungrateful soil,
To tempt the dangers of the billowy main
And break their strength with unabating toil
A frail, disastrous being to maintain.
But in their joyous calm abodes
The recompense of justice they receive;
And in the fellowship of gods
Without a tear eternal ages live.
While banished by the fates from joy and rest,
Intolerable woes the impious soul infest.

"But they who, in true virtue strong,
The third purgation can endure,
And keep their minds from fraudful wrong,
And guilt's contagion, pure;
They through the starry paths of Jove
To Saturn's blissful seat remove:
Where fragrant breezes, vernal airs,
Sweet children of the main,
Purge the blest island from corroding cares,
And fan the bosom of each verdant plain,
Whose fertile soil immortal fruitage bears;

Trees, from whose flaming branches flow,
Arrayed in golden bloom, refulgent beams;
And flowers of golden hue, that blow
On the fresh borders of their parent streams.
These by the blest in solemn triumph worn,
Their unpolluted hands and clustering locks adorn."
—GILBERT WEST.

In general, Pindar takes a bold, though reverent, stand against any mythic tale of evil-doing or ignoble motive in the divine beings. Of course, this often compelled him to recast, or even reverse, statements sanctioned by Hesiod and other epic authority. This must be regarded as evidence of a noble and truly religious nature. But Pindar does not, like Aischylos, offer us any large theological scheme or faith of his own. He is shocked, as we are, when an ancient myth "calls one of the blessed gods a cannibal." From any such tale he holds aloof.

Perhaps of all missing rolls the *Hymns* of Pindar would enrich us most. Yet it was doubtless no accident, but the deliberate choice of his own and later ages, that preserved, out of seventeen books, only the four of Epinikian odes. Even so, he is the unquestioned master among all Greek lyrists, probably the greatest example of dazzling verbal splendor in the whole tale of European literature. He even created, and used with secure success, an artificial form of Greek, avoiding the extreme peculiarities of all the dialects. Many of his un-Attic word-forms have been effaced by Hellenistic copyists, but he still requires special linguistic study.

It is doubtless our knowledge of Greek lyric, rather than the real story of that beautiful art, which ends somewhat suddenly with Pindar. But it is probably true that no great genius arose worthy to succeed the trio just discussed, except in Attica; and there all the best artists



ACHILLES IN SKYROS, THE CYPRIA.
Pompeian Wall-painting.



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were absorbed in that one highest development of choral lyric and of the poetic art generally: the drama. Even Simonides, Bacchylides, and Pindar had all found employment there. The career of Ion shows still more clearly the strong centripetal force. Thither, then, we too must turn.

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BOOK III

THE ATTIC DRAMA



"Athenian Aischylos this tomb doth hide,
Euphorion's son, who in fertile Gela died.
The glorious Marathonian glen could tell
His might, or long-haired Mede who knows it well."

Aischylos's Epitaph.

"Quietly o'er the tomb of Sophocles
Quietly, ivy, creeps with tendrils green;
And roses, ope your petals everywhere,
While dewy shoots of grapevine peep between,
Upon the wise and honeyed poet's grave,
Whom Muse and Grace their richest treasures gave."

—Anthol. Pal., vii., 22.
Translated by J. W. Mackail.

Political Events.		*Literary Events*
500–450 B.C.		500–450 B.C.
		Simonides and Bacchylides from Keos, Pindar from Thebes, choral poets.
		Epicharmos, comic poet, from Cos, active in Syracuse.
		Sophron, author of mimes in Syracuse.
499	Ionians and Athenians burn Sardis.	499 Aischylos's first appearance with tragedies, against Pratinas and Choirilos.
494	Capture of Miletos, end of the Ionian rebellion.	
490	First Persian invasion, and battle at Marathon.	
480–79	Second Persian invasion.	
480	Battles at Thermopylai, Artemision, Salamis.	
479	Battles Plataiai, Mycale.	
476	Athens's supremacy in the Ægean acknowledged. "Confederacy of Delos."	
		473 Aischylos's Persians
471 (?)	Banishment of Themistocles.	
		468 Sophocles on his first appearance defeats Aischylos.
		467 Aischylos victorious with Theban trilogy, including Seven against Thebes.
464–455	Third Messenian war.	
461	Kimon banished from Athens.	
	Ascendancy of Pericles.	
	War with Sparta.	
460	Athenian expedition to Egypt.	

	Political Events.		*Literary Events.*
	500–450 B.C.		500–450 B.C.
		458	Aischylos victorious with Oresteian trilogy.
456	Completion of the long walls to Piraieus and Phaleron.	456	Death of Aischylos at Gela.
455	Destruction of an Athenian fleet and army in Egypt.	455	Euripides's first appearance as tragic author.
454	Treasury of the Confederacy transferred from Delos to Athens.		
	450–400 B.C.		450–400 B.C.
			Hellanicos of Mitylene, historian.
			Herodotos of Halicarnassos, historian.
			Gorgias, Protagoras, Prodicos, active as rhetors and "sophists."
			Socrates of Athens, philosopher.
			Antiphon of Athens, orator.
			Sophocles, Euripides, Ion from Chios, Agathon, etc., tragic poets in Athens.
			Aristophanes, Eupolis, comic poets in Athens.
445	"Thirty Years Peace" between Athens and Sparta. Sparta's leadership recognized on land, Athens's on the sea.		
444	Pericles in full control in Athens.		
440	Revolt of the allies Samos and Byzantion, which are subjugated. Chios and Lesbos the only remaining independent allies.		
		438	Euripides's Alkestis.
434	War between Corinth and Kerkyra.		
433	Athens sides with Kerkyra.		
432	Potidaia revolts, and is besieged by the Athenians.		

	Political Events. 450–400 B.C.		*Literary Events.* 450–400 B.C.
431–404	Peloponnesian war.	431	Euripides's Medea.
430	Plague in Athens.		Pericles's Funeral Oration.
	Fall of Potidaia.		
429	Death of Pericles.		
428	Lesbos revolts.	428	Euripides's Hippolytos.
427	Athenians aid Ionians in Sicily.	427	Gorgias, rhetor, ambassador from Leontini to Athens.
425	Four hundred picked Spartans captured on Sphacteria by Cleon.	425	Aristophanes's Acharnians.
		424	Aristophanes's Knights.
		423	Aristophanes's Clouds.
422	Death of Cleon at Amphipolis.	422	Aristophanes's Wasps.
421	Peace of Nikias, and "fifty years alliance" between Athens and Sparta.	421	Aristophanes's Peace.
416	Athenians storm Melos, and massacre all adult males.		
415–413	Great expedition to Sicily, to aid Egesta, finally annihilated before Syracuse.	415	Euripides's Troades.
		414	Aristophanes's Birds,
412	General revolt of Athens's subjects. Sparta, subsidized by Persians, renews the war.	412	Euripides's Helena.
411	Short-lived oligarchy in Athens.	411	Aristophanes's Lysistrata and Thesmophoriazousai.
			Death of Antiphon.
		409	Sophocles's Philoctetes.
		408	Euripides's Orestes.
406	Last notable victory of Athenians, at Arginusai. Six victorious generals executed for neglect to pick up men on shattered ships. Socrates alone resists the passage of the illegal death sentence by the people.	406	Death of Euripides and Sophocles.
405	Athenian fleet destroyed at Aigos Potamoi on the Hellespont.	405	Aristophanes's Frogs.
404	Athens surrenders. Loss of vessels and long walls.		

Political Events. 400–336 B.C.	*Literary Events.* 400–336 B.C.
404–403 "Thirty tyrants" upheld by Spartan garrison, but finally destroyed by the invading exiles and popular uprising.	403 Lysias's speech against Erastosthenes.
401–399 March of the Ten Thousand to Babylonia under Prince Cyrus, and retreat conducted by Xenophon.	401 Sophocles's Oidipus Coloneus performed.
	400 Andokides's speech on the Mysteries.
	400 (?) Death of Thukydides.
	Xenophon, essayist, from Athens.
	Plato, philosopher, in Athens.
	Aristotle, his pupil.
	Lysias, Isaios, Isocrates, rhetors in Athens.
	Demosthenes, Æschines, Hyperides, orators in Athens.
	399 Execution of Socrates.
396–394 Agesilaos's successes against the Persians.	
394 General alliance against Sparta. Agesilaos, recalled from Asia, defeats allies at Coroneia and saves Sparta.	
393 Conon restores the long walls.	392 Aristophanes's Ecclesiazousai.
	391 Andokides's On the Peace.
	388 Aristophanes's Ploutos.
387 Peace of Antalkidas, terms dictated by the Persian king.	
381 Spartans seize Theban citadel, "Cadmeia," in time of peace.	380 Isocrates's Panegyricos.
379 Cadmeia and Thebes freed, by Pelopidas.	

Political Events 400–336 B.C.	*Literary Events* 400–336 B.C.
378 Athens regains leadership on the sea.	
371–362 Epaminondas makes Thebes the controlling power in Hellas.	
370 Messenia restored.	
362 Death of Epaminondas at Mantineia.	
359–336 Philip king of Macedon.	
357–355 Successful revolt from Athens of Chios, Rhodes, Cos, and Byzantion.	
	356 Isocrates On the Peace.
355 Philip captures Potidaia. Phokians seize and despoil Delphi, beginning the "second sacred war."	
	354 Isocrates's Panegyricos. Demosthenes On the Symmories.
352 Philip, aiming at Phokians, stopped by Athenians at Thermopylai.	
	351 Demosthenes On the State of the Rhodians. First Philippic.
	350–349 Olynthiac orations.
347 Philip destroys Olynthos.	
346 Philip makes peace with Athens, devastates Phokis, and takes its place in the Amphiktionic league, gaining control in central Greece.	346 Isocrates's Appeal to Philip.
	343 Aischines and Demosthenes On the False Legation.
	342 Second Philippic. Aristotle becomes the tutor of Alexander.
	341 Third Philippic.
340–338 Athens and many allied states at war with Philip.	
338 Decisive victory of Philip at Chaironeia in Boeotia.	338 Death of Isocrates.

Political Events.

400–336 B.C.

337 National assembly at Corinth proclaims Philip the Hellenic leader against the Persians.

336 Philip assassinated.
Alexander proclaimed leader of Hellas against Persia.

CHAPTER XX

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

ATHENS is barely mentioned in the epic. She matured slowly toward her great future. Thukydides declares that the Ionian stock in Attica was extremely ancient, and had been constantly enriched by immigration from many other races and clans. In the tale of the founder Cecrops, as in the legend of Cretan Minos and the grewsome tribute to the Minotaur, we see even a far-away memory of Oriental influences.

Thukyd., i., 2.

Theseus, who unites the demes of Attica in a single civic organism, is the friend of Heracles, but a much more realistic, perhaps an historical character. Royal statesmanship is nobly incarnated in him, at least as he appears in the Oidipus at Colonos. The myths of Attica generally give a favorable impression of her people. Noblest of all are the legends of Eleusis, Aischylos's birthplace. This ancient seat of Demeter's worship was never so completely absorbed by Athens as were the lesser towns. The first Athenian poet and man of letters, Solon, is also a statesman and legislator of a singularly tolerant, humane, tactful spirit. In his time Salamis was conquered by Athens. This brought into Attic control the home of Telamonian Ajax, one of Homer's chief figures. The desire, most natural in any Greek, to annex, as it were, the local myths as well, is illustrated by the wide-spread belief that, at about the same time, the Athenians, and perhaps Solon himself, interpolated into the Iliad a verse of the "Catalogue," to the effect that Ajax

Supra, p. 90.

Iliad, II., 558. "Led and stationed his ships where the forces of Athens were marshalled."

Though Athens, like so many other states, passed through a period of "tyranny," yet Pisistratos and his son Hipparchos, both patrons of living singers, and interested in the old epic poetry as well, were no blood-thirsty oppressors of their people. The folk was perhaps as yet hardly fitted for other than such paternal control.

At any rate, after that half-century the constitution of Solon was revived with striking success. He had left the decisive power still in the hands of the wealthier citizens, but through the fifth century the progress toward real democracy was rapid, until nearly all state offices were even assigned by lot. Party spirit often ran high, yet we have much evidence of self-sacrificing patriotism, as when, in the darkest hour before the dawn at Salamis, Aristides and Themistocles clasped hands, resolving that their only rivalry should be, which might do most for the fatherland. Such sentiments and characters are peculiarly Attic, as Herodotos, an impartial writer, clearly indicates. The supremacy of Athens throughout the Ægean was fairly won in the war with Xerxes. The Confederacy of Delos, a voluntary union under Athenian leadership for defence against the Persians, seemed for a time likely to dominate the whole Greek world. Pericles actually appears to have made one serious attempt to secure a representative diet from all the states.

Herod., viii., 79.

Plutarch, Pericles, § 17.

Possibly Athens and Sparta were as incapable of such united action as were Prussia and Austria in 1866. At any rate, it came to a desperate struggle between them. Largely through what seem like accidents—Pericles's premature death, the treason of Alkibiades, the diabolical cleverness in intervention of the Persian boy Cyrus—Athens was broken and humiliated at the close of the fifth

century before Christ. Her political strength never recovered from that blow, though for a few years the trumpet tones of Demosthenes made her the reluctant leader of the forlorn hope against Philip of Macedon. The intellectual supremacy, won early in the fifth century, was fully maintained through the fourth. Yet the careers of her three greatest dramatists fall wholly within that marvellous fifth century, itself supremely tragical in its finale. Plato and Demosthenes agree in deploring that degeneracy of Athenians to which they are the two greatest exceptions.

The old story, that the Homeric epics were first carefully written out, and recited entire, in Athens, under Pisistratos and his successors, has of late again found defenders. The especial championship of the Eastern Ionians by the metropolis, assumed at the very beginning of the fifth century, might well include the importation of their heroic lays. Certainly such recitations at the Panathenaic festival would have been a most fitting inspiration for Aischylos, and for his brother-heroes of Marathon.

The sturdier blend of Dorian quality in the Ionic folk of Attica is clearly seen in their creative works, especially in architecture, an art which Mr. Norton has taught us to regard as peculiarly ethnic, and also supremely ethical. Indeed, in the Parthenon Doric simplicity and strength may have been even more evident, at the first glance, than Ionic grace.

It is no mere fancy that classic tragedy, the noblest expression of Attic ideals, unites the same two distinct tendencies. This can be seen even in the metrical forms of drama: choral song, its basis and original element, was frankly borrowed and imported from the Dorian Peloponnese. The colloquial iambics chiefly used in the dialogue, like the longer trochaic measure which, according to Aristotle, was at first the favorite, came from Ionia, being probably invented by Archilochos. Even the "monodic

lyric," the especial favorite of Æolic Lesbians, reappears in tragedy.

As we have said, the political history of Greece may be regarded as a story of instructive, inspiring failure. Even Periclean Athens made prompt shipwreck on the rock of imperialism. Yet in that age and land Hellenism culminated. Turning away from vain regrets over what might have been, we may joyfully recognize, in the poetry as in the architecture of Pericles's generation, a priceless and lasting heritage for all later ages, stamped with the mint-mark of its own time, yet universal, purely human, in its noblest traits.

Rome learned better how to merge the individual citizen in a state that should resist all outward violence, and even dissension within. Yet, failing to federalize her conquered vassals, to give them due representation in any central council, lacking, too, the kindly spirit toward alien men which Christianity may yet enable us to practise in full as well as to preach, Rome also fell, but not until she had passed on toward us that Græco-Roman culture which still sways our life more largely than we know.

In no direction is that influence more clearly unbroken than in the drama. The mediæval miracle-play is one of the links between Aischylos, Menander, Plautus, Seneca, on the one hand, and Molière, Shakespeare, Goethe, on the other. Every modern dramatic revival has also been enriched and stimulated by direct study of the classics. Yet even so, the differences between Attic and Elizabethan drama appear at first glance fundamental.

Shakespeare, we declare, holds the mirror up to actual life. Every great Greek artist believed his picture to be ideal, imaginative, remote from ordinary realities. To the Puritan, at least, the theatre was the enemy of the church: Athenian tragedy was the culminating point in the ceremonies of a Holy Week. While we are perfectly right,

then, in regarding Sophocles and Shakespeare, when they portray the heroism of an Antigone and a Cordelia, as men of kindred genius, who would fain see, and teach us to see, life steadily and see it whole, yet we must nevertheless always remember, and understand if we can, the peculiar environment and heredity of the Athenian dramatist.

The original element in drama was choral dance and song. How large a part that art had played in Hellas, perhaps from the very beginnings of the rudest clannish life, has been emphasized on many a preceding page. The gradual appearance of a mimetic element has been noted as well. There are many early traces of such mimicry, especially at Delphi, where the primeval conflict of Apollo with the Python was a favorite subject, and at Eleusis, where the sorrows of the Mourning Mother were undoubtedly enacted. That a national drama should have developed, as a high and serious art, at any such centre, would seem natural: but it never did. Dionysos, or a divinity closely akin to him, was a sharer in both these local cults; but tragedy appeared in the rural Attic dome of Icaria.

The dithyramb, a cyclic dance and song in Dionysos's honor, first mentioned by Archilochos, was raised to a high artistic level, as we hear, by Arion. Yet in Attica, at least, the drama was at first the rude and hilarious diversion of a rustic folk. Even the austere Aischylos himself declares:

Aisch., Fragm., 355.

"'Tis fit that mixt with shouting be
The dithyrambos, Dionysos' comrade:
Apollo's is the measured psean and the modest muse."

The dithyramb, like the Dionysos-cult itself, was probably of Oriental origin. It was regularly set to the Phrygian "nome" or form of the musical scale. The Dionysiac worship seems to be in its origin the natural

rejoicing of man over the return of Spring. That the representatives of lower animal life, like the satyrs, the centaurs, the goat-footed Pan of Arcadia, should be connected therewith, is most natural.

Wine and the vine are in Homer not yet the peculiar gift of Dionysos, probably not associated with him. At least, the mighty liquor that prostrated the Cyclops had been given to Odysseus by a priest of Apollo. Dionysos, rarely mentioned by Homer, is a rather cowardly creature, not an Olympian god at all. The opposition to his worship seems really to have been stubborn, and most excusable. Yet Dionysos's influence, even in so temperate and dignified a folk as the Athenians, was, at his especial season, doubtless greater than that of any other divinity. It swept a whole people into its orgiastic enthusiasm.

Odyss., ix., 197.

Iliad, vi., 132-39; xiv., 325. Odyss., xi., 325; xxiv., 74.

The word *tragoidia* has an origin anything but noble, for *tragos* (he-goat) is a name of derision for the semi-human satyrs. As such the members of the chorus were disguised. The Mænads, or maddened women, attendants on the great nature-god, also appear in drama, as in many works of plastic art. That such orgies as we see there represented can ever have been permitted in Attica, may be doubted; but a time of relaxation and uproar, like the Roman Saturnalia or Carnival, the Great Dionysia of April certainly was.



SACK OF TROY, THE EPIC CYCLE.
"Vivenzio" Vase, in Naples Museum.



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CHAPTER XXI

DRAMATISTS BEFORE AISCHYLOS

THESPIS, called the founder of drama, lived in the middle of the sixth century before Christ. His chief innovation was the "first actor," or interlocutor, who recited, and may also have conversed with the leader of the chorus, in the intervals of song. Thespis himself took this rôle. The invention of linen masks may have enabled him to play several successive parts. Thus dialogue, the chief feature of a modern play, first appears as a mere casual interruption of the choral performance.

Suidas s. v. Thespis.

The Thespian drama attracted much attention. Even the aged Solon came to Icaria, disapproved, and reproached Thespis for "uttering such falsehoods in public." The answer was: "It's harmless: in sport." This light-hearted performance was transferred to the city in 534 B.C. by Pisistratos, who shrewdly kept his subjects in contented humor by the almost unbroken annual circle of festivals, which long outlasted his dynasty. Perhaps at this time also an annual competition by three poets, for prizes, became usual.

Plutarch, Solon, § 29.

Not a word of any play by Thespis remains. The dialogue, indeed, may have been largely improvised, and never reduced to writing. Pratinas, another early "tragedian," survives in a few lyric fragments only, anything but austere in tone, *e.g.*:

> "What tumult this? What dances these?
> To the Dionysiac altar uproarious
> What saucy rout draws nigh?"

". . . Hearken, ivy-crownéd lord, unto my Dorian dancing-band!"

This last verse will remind us that the chorus leader, or the sole "actor," probably represented oftenest Dionysos himself, whose adventures were the real and proper subject of both song and recitation.

Choirilos, another lost dramatist, is quoted only to be censured for such a harmless metaphor as

"Rocks, the bones of Earth, and streams her veins."

Phrynichos is a somewhat more definite figure; but his career reaches far into the fifth century, and must have been greatly stimulated by the imperious genius of Aischylos. Phrynichos, apparently, began the perilous experiment of representing not merely myths outside the Dionysiac cycle, but even recent and real events. When the ill-conducted rebellion of the Asiatic Greeks against their Persian overlord Darius, was ended by the wretched fall of Miletos in 494 B.C., Phrynichos promptly dramatized that disaster. The Athenians wept over the spectacle, says Herodotos, but fined the artist for depicting to them "their own sorrows." Athens had actually aided the rebels, and was soon to feel the stroke of Persian retaliation.

Herod., vi., 21.

About twenty years later the aged poet repeated the experiment of contemporary drama with a happier theme, the signal sorrows of his nation's foes. His "Phœnicians," commemorating the victory at Salamis, appears to have been performed about 476 B.C., and may well have aroused Aischylos to attempt the same subject four years later. An ancient scholiast, accusing the younger poet of plagiarism, quotes Phrynichos's opening line only:

Argument. Aischyl. Persians.

"These are the Persians' seats who came of old. . . ."

So he, too, like Aischylos after him, set his scene far away in the mysterious Orient.

Phrynichos is a lost and irrecoverable poet. One famous line survives through a graceful quotation of it by Sophocles at a fitting social moment:

Ion apud Athenæum, 604 A.

"On crimson cheeks the light of Eros shines."

Aristophanes in his Frogs makes Aischylos, in Pluto's realm, praise Phrynichos generously as his own equal. The later time has decided otherwise, and as Pindar says:

Frogs, 1298–1300.

Olymp., I., 33-4.

"The years that follow after
Are the wisest witnesses."

CHAPTER XXII

EXTERNAL CONDITIONS OF TRAGIC PERFORMANCE

THE statements made on this subject apply almost wholly to Athens in the fifth century, which includes the entire career of the three supreme masters. Even the very outlines must be incomplete, and often disputable. Each year three wealthy citizens were chosen as *choregoi, i.e.*, to pay the entire expense for the dramatic contest. To each was assigned an artist to "train the chorus": incidentally he also composed the text, which alone remains to us, and the music for the choral songs and monodies. Moreover, Aischylos and Sophocles often acted in their own plays. The poet received, if victorious, a prize, of unknown value. The rich choregos had only the honor, and the privilege of setting up a votive tablet in public. The decision as to the relative merits of the contestants was made by a jury of ten, selected by lot, at the latest possible moment, to prevent any improper influence being brought to bear on them.

The great open-air stone theatre now seen in Athens is essentially a fourth-century erection, with many later changes, but older structures may long have occupied nearly the same site. The old circular orchestra, *i.e.*, dancing-place, was retained in the fifth century, but a *proskenion* or back wall represented a pillared temple or palace, usually appropriate to the plot. Hence the spectators, sitting on the hill-slope, looked down from the other three sides only. If the part of the orchestra just in front of this proskenion was raised at all, to form a stage for the

speaking characters, it was but a slight elevation, perhaps suggested originally by the stylobate of a real temple, which is also by two or three steps above the general level of the ground. Possibly the actors were sufficiently exalted over the chorus merely by their thick-soled buskins, regal robes, and imposing masks, in which a sort of short megaphone was set as a mouthpiece.

The stage machinery was apparently simple. Divine creatures could be lowered from above, or came up from below by "Charon's Stairs." Actors usually appeared from doors in the proskenion, but might come on as the chorus did, on the right if supposed to arrive from the city or near at hand, from the left if coming from a distance. A triangular prism at each side of the scene could be revolved to change the setting of the piece. The use of a curtain is not proven, nor probable. Hence changes of scene are rare, and any considerable lapse of time is glossed over rather than emphasized.

Compare infra, pp. 189 and 206.

The old cyclic chorus of fifty was reduced to twelve, or possibly divided among the four plays. Sophocles raised their number to fifteen. As they sang they generally marched, danced, or grouped themselves about the Dionysiac altar or *thymele*, which stood in the centre of the orchestra. The choristers were no longer attired always as satyrs, but as befitted their part: *e.g.*, sea-nymphs in the Prometheus, aged counsellors in the Antigone, Furies in the Eumenides, sailors in the Philoctetes.

But to all this, conservatism made one notable exception. Each poet presented four plays; the fourth should have the old-fashioned satyr chorus, to which the plot must accommodate itself. The Alkestis of Euripides, which was the fourth play of its group, is the only known violation of this rule requiring the satyr drama as the afterpiece. The populace is apt to be conservative in such

matters. Even the use of other than Dionysiac myths was evidently opposed stubbornly, since for centuries afterward the favorite phrase to stigmatize irrelevant digression in any field was: "What has this to do *with Dionysos?*" Plutarch says this complaint was originally aimed at Phrynichos and Aischylos.

Plutarch, Symp., I., p. 615 A.

The popular god had several protracted festivals in the Athenian calendar. New tragedies were regularly performed at the Great Dionysia, in late March and April, sometimes also at the Lenaia in January. The more esoteric and mystical rites, which gave Dionysos a serious character, occurred at the Anthesteria, or feast of flowers, in early March. At the Great Dionysia we hear only of relaxation and merriment. Strangers flocked freely to Athens. The Lenaia, or Vintage-feast, was a less notable and more purely Athenian season of drinking, jest, and jollity.

Theatres were built later in numerous Greek cities, and tragic authors are known to us, by name and little more, in scores. Yet all acknowledged the supreme genius of the Attic Three, whose dramas maintained their popularity, and were for centuries reproduced in many Hellenic lands. From their hands alone are Greek tragedies preserved. We may now turn to the first and greatest of the three names.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

This chapter endeavors to avoid questions yet disputed by archæologists. Especially the question of an elevated stage in the fifth century is still under discussion. For full references the reader is referred to A. E. Haigh's two books, "Attic Theatre" and "Tragic Drama of the Greeks" (Oxford, Clarendon Press). The newer German view, that there was no stage at all, is held by Barnett, in his "Greek Drama" (Temple Primers, Macmillan). The present writer has an essay on the early tragedy in the *Sewanee Review*, April, 1901.

CHAPTER XXIII

AISCHYLOS

THE chief creator of drama was born beside the tranquil Bay of Eleusis. The sacred associations of the spot may well have colored his temper from childhood. In the Frogs he is made to utter these lines, probably quoted from his own "Eleusinians:"

Frogs, 886-87.

"Oh thou Demeter, who my spirit reared,
May I be worthy of thy mysteries."

Politically he was none the less a freeborn Attic citizen, for Athens included all Attica. When a boy of fifteen he saw the surviving sons of Pisistratos driven from Athens. At about the age of twenty-five he first contended, in vain, against Choirilos and Pratinas, for the dramatic prize. At thirty-five he fought on the plain of Marathon: the only event of his life mentioned by him in the modest epitaph for his own Sicilian tomb. He was forty before he won the prize with his dramas, but thenceforward was usually placed first among the three contestants.

With his people, Aischylos must have been driven from home by Xerxes's invading host, and undoubtedly shared the glorious strife in the Salaminian straits, the most critical and epochal battle of all history. Both as a pageant for the hour, and as a crisis in the fate of civilization, that battle is best treated in his Persians. Herodotos half a century later adds only lesser details, and has hardly as far-sighted a sense of the larger meaning.

Herod., Book viii.

Soon after the eruption of Ætna in 470 B.C. Aischylos

was in Sicily, and to glorify Hieron's newly founded city wrote a local play, the "Ætnean Women." That he died, and not unexpectedly, at Gela in Sicily, seems well attested by his epitaph.

The reason for these journeys is unknown. He was but following the immemorial tradition of his wander-loving guild, from the homeless singer of the Iliad down. A liking for the splendor in kings' palaces is not necessarily unpatriotic, nor unpoetic. Aischylos's epitaph for the martyrs of Marathon was adjudged inferior to that com-

Plutarch, Kimon, § 8.

posed by the alien Simonides. Young Sophocles also, at his first appearance as a dramatist, defeated his veteran rival. Yet we can hardly accept the traditional account of Aischylos's indignation over such incidents. A gossiping informant, Athenaios, tells a much fitter story, how once when unjustly defeated Aischylos said: "I dedicate my tragedies to Time, which will assuredly give them their due honor."

Ath., 347 E.

Fairly well attested is the curious anecdote, that he was once fiercely assailed in the theatre, and haled before the courts, for betraying the Mysteries in his drama; and was acquitted when he proved that he had himself never been initiated.

Aristotle, Nicom. Eth., iii., 1, and Scholiast.

A certain conservative and aristocratic feeling, perhaps a dislike for the extreme democratic doctrines of Themistocles's or Pericles's party, we naturally ascribe to Aischylos. But we have no reason to think his civic life any less happy than his triumphant artistic career.

The chief formal innovation of Aischylos was the addition of "a second actor." This made possible a dialogue in which the chorus need take no part. The third player was added by Sophocles, but accepted by his senior. The colloquial scenes grew steadily in importance, acting became a profession, and in Euripides the choral songs are often but brief intermezzi, loosely connected with the

proper plot. Even in Aischylos the dialogue occupies by far the greater space—from two-thirds to six-sevenths of the printed text. His actors, also, occasionally sing solos or "monodies." How far Aischylos improved or invented scenery, character-masks, theatrical machinery in general, we cannot say with confidence. However, he clearly appears to have created the serious drama as an art-form, in which his successors made only minor changes, for better or worse.

Far more important is the spiritual, the æsthetic side of Aischylos's work. This makes his the chief poetic voice of Athens, of Hellas, in the most heroic generation of their existence. To him at least, and doubtless to his entire people, the victory over Persia seemed itself a mighty drama, with the gods themselves as protagonists. In that hour traditional belief was quickened to living faith in an overruling Providence.

Like Pindar, Aischylos found much that was abhorrent and incredible in the traditional myths. But he recast them, boldly yet reverently, giving them often not merely a beauty but an ethical meaning of which Hesiod never dreamed. Of course, he rejected altogether, as an artist if not as a philosophic thinker, what he could not mould to his own lofty purposes. His brooding yet exultant spirit, his deep, gloomy pondering on sin, fate, heredity, Nemesis, make him a kinsman of Isaiah, of Dante, of Milton. In some of his plays, as the Prometheus, not one merely human character appears. The universe, rather than man's world, is represented on his mimic scene.

Small wonder if such a Titan, wreaking himself on the forms of the rollicking "goat-song," left it, hardly recognizable, as Tragedy. And yet, once again, we must not be misled by our own antithetical use of the latter word. Comedy was yet to appear, as a later offshoot from the same general source in the Dionysiac ecstasy.

In an Aischylean drama there is a struggle indeed, but the finale, if not happy, is at least almost always peaceful. The solution of the plot is accepted by the auditors, even by the defeated hero or sufferer, as inevitable, fitting, just. That is to say, the poet is a devout philosopher, a moral teacher, who undertakes in full confidence to

> "assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

Moreover, Aischylos and his successors understood the artistic value of contrast. They would hardly have accepted Voltaire's criticism, that the undignified gravediggers spoil the pathos of Ophelia's funeral. In their loftiest dramas there are ignoble characters, grotesque and even grimly comic incidents. But Aischylos's high purpose is never lost from sight. By exciting "terror and pity" for his heroic sufferers and toilers he purifies those emotions in us, lifting us toward the level of his ideal art.

Various later authorities ascribe to Aischylos seventy, seventy-two, or ninety plays. The discrepancy may be partly caused by the satyr-dramas, which were least congenial to his spirit, and were perhaps not fully written out, with a settled text, but left to improvisation. At any rate, the later ancients had but few plays of this type, and only one, Euripides's Cyclops, has come down to us.

To connect his three serious plays closely in plot was a rule, perhaps an invariable usage, with Aischylos. It fitted perfectly his views as to hereditary suffering for sin. That suffering, however, though inevitable, is not itself an unmixt evil. It may be at least sanctified to the good of man, either in a later generation, as in Orestes's case, or even in the original sinner himself, *e.g.*, Prometheus.

The Theban trilogy — Laios, Oidipus, Seven against

Thebes—dealt with three generations of the unhappy royal house. How the satyrs were used in the afterpiece, The Sphinx, we can only surmise. Nor do we know that Aischylos usually attempted, as in this case, to draw his fourth plot still from the same mythic cycle. The line of Atreus, Agamemnon, Orestes makes an equally effective subject.

Aischylos is said to have called his dramas "Bits from Athen., 347 B. Homer's banquet." The Homeric name may well have included the whole epic cycle at least. The remark, moreover, if uttered, may have been but a modest confession of indebtedness for general artistic inspiration. The attempt to dramatize the epic scenes themselves was rare, and not supremely successful. But it is remarkable that most of our surviving Greek tragedies, and a large proportion of those known to us through titles and fragments, do deal with earlier or later scenes in the lives of Homer's people. This we may fairly claim as still another reminder how imperishable is the power and charm of the Iliad.

The oldest of Aischylos's seven extant plays is the "Suppliants." It is even possible that it was composed before the invasion of the Persians. The myth describes the arrival in Greece of Danaos and his fifty daughters, fleeing out of Egypt from their cousins and unwelcome suitors. The tale of *fifty*, so imbedded in the legend itself, might indicate that the entire cyclic chorus of Arion's day, of that exact number, was still employed in this drama. There is little action, and that little falls largely to the daughters of Danaos, *i.e.*, to the chorus. The play obviously requires a sequel, and the marriage of the maids, with the murderous vengeance wreaked, by all save one, upon their husbands on the bridal night, must have been assigned to the lost dramas which succeeded it in the original group. In one scene only of this play is the second actor requisite.

Of another early drama, the "Seven against Thebes," mention has already been made. The banished son of "Oidipus," Polyneikes, comes with six allied chieftains to assert his royal right against his usurping younger brother. The seven invaders are slain at the seven gates by Theban champions, the hostile brothers meeting death together, at each other's hands. None of this action takes place on the stage, and the play is mainly a series of prolonged declamations, as each defender receives and accepts his task at King Eteocles's behest. Later a messenger describes their fall.

Supra, p. 186.

Furthermore, possibly under the influence of Sophocles's noblest play, this drama has been given a final scene which does not properly complete the trilogy, or the drama itself, and can hardly be a part of Aischylos's original plan. Antigone, despite earnest opposition and threats of punishment, declares that she will bury her traitor-brother. Half the chorus of Theban citizens resolve to aid her, while the other half would dissuade them. At this point the tragedy abruptly closes. We can hardly suppose that such a problem was ever left to be solved in the satyr-drama, even though its title in this case was The Sphinx.

The only trilogy preserved to us entire is Aischylos's Oresteia. The first play, the "Agamemnon," includes the return of the Greek commander, after Troy's fall, his chariot shared by the captive prophetess Cassandra. His faithless wife, and her lover, slay him—out of the spectators' sight, in the palace—and the frenzied Trojan princess, who has thrillingly prophesied his death and no less clearly foresees her own, is dragged in to share his fate. There is hardly a drama in any speech more powerful. Clytaimnestra, receiving her husband at his palace-gates and presently triumphing over his corpse, is a figure that almost dwarfs Lady Macbeth herself. The choral songs are peculiarly difficult, prolonged, and corrupted by copy-

ists: yet they leave on the reader the conviction that a mightier genius even than the Homeric has arisen, almost competent to wrest his theme from the master himself.

Before the "Choēhoroi" begins, years are supposed to have intervened. The title (The Libation-pourers) is taken from the chorus, made up of Trojan captives, who make their offerings on the murdered monarch's tomb. The youthful Orestes returns from exile to avenge his father's wrongs. Aided, as before, by his elder sister Electra, he slays both the lion-hearted queen Clytaimnestra, his mother, and the cowardly Aigisthos, her lover. But though commanded by Apollo's oracle, such a deed must in turn draw vengeance on the doer. Orestes feels the coming of madness, foresees his wandering exile: and beholds, though his friends do not, the snaky-haired Furies rising to pursue him. We are tempted to call these weird sisters the personified pangs of remorse. Such a correspondence between inward vision and outward shape there often is, no doubt: but, to the Greek imagination, the person was more vivid than the abstraction: the allegory is all but forgotten in the picturesque reality.

Before the third drama, the "Eumenides," begins, Orestes has found refuge at Delphi. Furthermore, a notable change of scene occurs early in the play, for Apollo sends his suppliant to Athens, to stand trial, before a jury, on the hill of Ares. This is a piece of magnificent audacity in the Attic artist, and is deliberately used to glorify the local court of Areiopagos, of which this is supposed to be the first session. By the aid of Athena's vote in his favor Orestes obtains a tie, which, according to the actual usage in cases of homicide, was regarded as an acquittal. The Furies themselves accept the decision, and under their new appellation of the Eumenides (the Kindly minded) are escorted to their honored and permanent sanctuary in the cave beneath the Acropolis.

This trilogy, performed but two years before the poet's death, is the unquestioned masterpiece of Aischylos, and doubtless of ancient drama itself. Even in such a translation as is possible in English its effect is still terrific and overwhelming. No wonder that the veteran carried off the prize. This great work is discussed with comparative brevity here, partly because no synopsis or extracts can give any conception of its power, chiefly because every serious student of European literature must at least once submit himself, as completely as possible, to its awesome spell.

Such a series of dramas may perhaps be compared to the acts of one modern tragedy. How long a time the marching and singing of the chorus consumed we have little idea, but the mere text of the whole trilogy is not greater in extent than one of Shakespeare's longer tragedies, much briefer than Schiller's "Don Carlos."

Best known of all Aischylean plays, probably, is the Prometheus. The rather brief drama which we possess is but one section, we think the first, of a trilogy. The other portions are known to us through meagre fragments, and their loss is greatly to be deplored. In this Titanic drama, composed at an unknown date, the poet set forth most fearlessly his beliefs as to the government of the universe. In all the other six plays we find expressed an unswerving faith in the divine justice. Here an unrepentant rebel against supreme Zeus holds from beginning to end the centre of the scene, hurling defiance at all who dwell on Olympos, and claiming credit especially as the champion of injured man.

It is surely no accident that this inspiring first act, as we may call it, was preserved, while the scenes setting forth Prometheus's submission, reconciliation, confession of error, have been suffered to perish. Not merely a social rebel like Shelley, but even our own gentle Longfellow

and optimistic Lowell have felt full sympathy with this stoical sufferer for men. And yet, to Aischylos himself such approval of his hero would have been as great a shock as if Milton had heard the enthusiastic praise once accorded to his Satan by a gallant soldier who was reading "Paradise Lost:" "A mighty fine fellow, and I hope he'll win!" Prometheus is no less in the wrong, as to his action, than Milton's magnificent outlaw. That he is noble and generous in purpose makes him the more dangerous. In that he represents good impulses, misguided for a time, and at last fully reconciled to a wiser will, he is a higher conception than the Hebraic Satan of "Paradise Lost."

Aischylos accepted, indeed, some traditions of his people that accord ill with our ideals of supreme wisdom and power. Zeus has dethroned his own father, after a fierce and prolonged war. By an unwise union he may beget a son who shall drive him in turn from the Olympian throne. Who that dangerous bride is Prometheus knows, but will not tell, until, after ages of torture, he reveals the secret as the price of his release. She, whose child is to be "mightier than his sire," the sea-goddess Thetis, is then safely wedded to an obscure mortal prince, and later bears the Homeric leader Achilles, far greater than his father, Peleus of Thessalian Phthia.

Certain details of our play seem almost certainly drawn from Hesiod, others from Pindar. But Aischylos had a loftier faith than either Bœotian poet. He must, indeed, have held the daring conception that Zeus had grown sager and mightier through the ages. All these early perils to his throne are regarded as in Aischylos's own day long past. Even the imprisoned Titans of the old régime were released from Tartaros, and reconciled with Zeus, before the trilogy ended. The last play of the three

E.g.: Theog., 385; Isthm., viii., 60-78.

probably resembled somewhat the "Eumenides," closing with the formal installation of Prometheus in the Attic cult, under his Athenian title, "Firebearer."

There are not wanting, even in the extant play, clear hints of such a solution. Every other character who appears sympathizes indeed with Prometheus, but not one approves his rash acts of disobedience. The fire which he has stolen from Heaven may have saved ephemeral men from Zeus's intention to destroy the entire mortal race; but a better folk would have taken its place. The word that occurs like a refrain with most striking frequency means *self-willed;* and while Prometheus's intention is accepted as generous and heroic, we ourselves should realize that he is grievously misled by his arrogant confidence.

Vss. 964, 1012, 1034, 1037; cf. 436, 64, etc.

Yet his figure is one of the most magnificent in all literature. Dragged in by Might and Force as the first line is spoken, he is chained and spiked by the reluctant Hephaistos to a crag on the desolate shores of the great Northern ocean. Thus he dominates the scene, until overwhelmed and buried by wrathful Zeus at the close of our play.

He is disdainfully silent until his tormentors depart; or, in terms of the theatre, only two actors are in use, so Force is a mute, while the Prometheus is really a huge wooden image, from behind which one of the players later speaks his part. The first utterance of the sufferer has always been admired. Yet carefully analyzed it reveals vacillation and self-doubt.

Vss. 88-113.

"O air divine, and breezes fleet of wing!
Ye river-sources, and the deep-sea waves'
Innumerable laugh! great mother Earth!
And on the sun's all-seeing disc I call!
See ye what I, a god, endure from gods.
Do ye behold in what disgrace



HESIOD AND THE MUSES, HESIOD'S THEOGONY.

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Wasting away through unnumbered years
I shall endure? For the youthful lord
Of the Blessed Ones has contrived for me
Such unseemly bonds.
Alas! for the evils both now and to come
I lament. What, pray, is destined to be
The issue of these my troubles?
And yet, what say I? All do I foreknow
Exactly that shall be; nor unforeseen
Shall any trouble come! My destined fate
With resignation I should bear, who know
The strength resistless of Necessity.
But I can neither tell nor leave untold
My lot. For bringing gifts to men in these
Perplexities I wretchedly am bound.
The source of fire within the hollow reed
I sought by stealth, which has become for men
Teacher of every art, and great resource;
But this atonement for my sins I pay,
Being aloft in air bound fast in chains."

Later Prometheus mentions, without regret or shame, that in the great war he had sided at first with his father and the other Titans, but, when they refused to be guided by him, had gone over to Zeus. Perhaps he appeals to us most as the teacher of men:

"At first they, gazing, gazed but fruitlessly;
Vss. 447-71. Hearkening, they did not hear, but like the shapes
Of visions through an age that lasted long
All things confused. Nor knew they sunny homes
Shaped out of bricks, nor handiwork of wood.
Beneath the earth they dwelt, like helpless ants,
In the unsunned recesses of the caves.
And no sure sign had they of winter time,
Or flowery spring, or summer rich in fruits;
All things in utter ignorance they did,
Until the risings of the stars I showed

To them, and settings hard to be discerned.
Number, most shrewd device, I found for them,
And letters well combined; and memory,
Worker of all things, mother of the muse.
I was the first who yoked the beasts to bear
The collar and the rider, and relieve
The race of mortals from their heaviest toils.
I harnessed to the car the steeds that love
The rein, the pride of wealthiest luxury.
And no one else before me did invent
The sea-tost, sail-winged craft of mariners.
So many things have I contrived—ah, me!—
For mortals; but myself have no device
Whereby to free me from my present woe!"

In such passages the parable of Prometheus (the Forethinker) seems almost too transparent. Instead of a divine benefactor, or even, as the story was often told, the creator of mankind, we seem to behold a type of early man himself, painfully learning to cope with Nature's rude forces. But we must insist once again that the Greek believed his myth more eagerly than he probed its abstract meaning.

We may perhaps wonder that Aischylos, with his fearless spirit and lofty ideal of the divine nature, did not reject every tale imputing human failings to the gods, or even drop all belief in such beings, returning to the monotheism which the earliest Aryan men probably held, and which an occasional bold voice like Xenophanes's continued to preach. Aischylos, however, was not only an imaginative poet, but a dramatist of supreme constructive genius. He loved, and wished to believe in, the heroic past, from which tradition required him to draw his themes. Even our own feeling, especially as to Homer, is somewhat the same still, at times. Achilles is a splendid reality. Achilles without Thetis, Thetis without Zeus, is hardly

imaginable. We must accept the world of myth as a whole.

That behind all the Olympians there was some far mightier person, or force: Fate, Nemesis, Justice, was a belief nowise peculiar to Aischylos. At times, again, in choral passages, he utters a pantheistic or even monotheistic belief, doubtless as frankly as his people would permit. Both to him and to his son Euphorion are attributed the lines:

Iliad, xx., 127-28; xvi., 433-34. Herod., i., 91. Orac. apud Herod., vii., 141.

> "Æther is Zeus, earth Zeus, and heaven Zeus:
> Zeus are all things,—and what is over them."

The father of gods and men dictates all of Apollo's oracles. Even Dikè, Justice, is once called his child. The name, indeed, is not essential:

Eumen., 616-18. Sept., 645.

Agamemnon, vs. 160. "Zeus, whosoe'er he be, if this name please his ear."

In such rhapsodic moments, at least, all the other creatures of the Pantheon may well have been, in the poet's thought, hardly more than angels and ministers to execute the Supreme Will.

Once only is Aischylos known to have dramatized recent historical events. Though the "Persians" was given second among the three serious dramas, it is not even certain that the other plays in the trilogy, now lost, were of similar character, nor connected in plot. The satyr drama, curiously enough, was a Prometheus.

It is known that when Phrynichos, a few years before, presented the same subject, Themistocles was the choregos. That it was a bold if indirect political move of his is a natural surmise. At the least, Themistocles would gladly see thus commemorated the proudest day of his own life,

when, like Bismarck on the field of Sadowa, he saw triumphantly justified the unpopular policy of year-long sacrifice and preparation for the inevitable crisis: the policy which he had initiated and carried through.

That the high-minded and conservative Aischylos would admire rather Aristides than the shifty, democratic Themistocles, is again probable. We readily suspect a political reason for this play also. And certainly Aristides's own exploit at Salamis, in cutting to pieces the Asiatic infantry on the isle of Psyttaleia, is in the "Persians" exaggerated into the chief calamity of Xerxes. Again the victory next year at Plataia, when Aristides led the Athenian line, is dragged into mention by the device of a striking but much too detailed and definite prophecy. If we imagine any modern playwright set at work under such partisan stress as we here surmise, the result would be anything but remote, ideal, calmly artistic. Yet the "Persians" is all this.

Vss. 434-35.

Vss. 796-808.

Furthermore the play has an unique value as a contemporary account, presented to thousands of eye-witnesses, survivors from the combatants and from the homeless Athenian people, which had crowded the rocky shore of Salamis on that eventful morning. On the whole, no play is more interesting than this: though we may well agree with the judgment of fifth century Athens, which, as it appears, never again permitted tragedy to descend from the mythic ether to the murkier air of recent history and political strife.

The scene is laid not in Greece at all, but at the Persian court, far off in the unfamiliar Orient: not because tragedy must be a tale of disaster, for there is no such rule: rather to give it the remoteness of idealized art. An actual battle-scene, like that in Henry V., would have been dreamed of in Athens only by a comic dramatist.

The chief character is Atossa, widow of Darius and mother of the absent Xerxes. The chorus is the council of Persian grandees. The struggle requisite in tragedy is here between hope and despair in Atossa's heart. At times, and decidedly in the closing scene, when Xerxes himself leads in unmanly lamentations, the theatrical fiction grows transparent, and we seem to hear the Athenian audience applauding and exulting over the sorrows of the humiliated foeman. Yet even so, the "Persians" is on the whole a successful work of art. These are no vulgarly realistic figures, but statuesque heroic shapes, immortal in their woe.

There is no Prologue (Prologos), as an opening speech, or dialogue by actors, was called. As in other early plays, the Parodos, or Entrance, song of the chorus, begins the drama. The local color was evidently strong, in costumes at least. A poetic catalogue of the departed armament is sung. Many sonorous names of chieftains, absent and missed, are repeated, or invented. *E.g.:*

Vss. 34-41. "Yet others the mighty all-nourishing Nile
Has sent us: Sousiskánes born
In the land of Egypt, the sources' lord,
And he who in sacred Memphis rules,
Arsámes the great, and he who commands,
—Ariomárdos, in Thebes the Old:
And the dwellers in marshes, the rowers of ships,
Dreaded, in multitude countless."

But the note of confidence over the hosts marshalled from three continents dies away in doubt and terror. Especially the mention of the sea fills the old men's hearts with foreboding. With it comes a rash impiety in the form of their speech.

Vss. 103-6. "Yet a god's deceitful craft
Who of mortal men may shun?

Vss. 109-11. Até, with her gentle mien,
Lureth man into the toils.

Vss. 114-16. Therefore is my soul in raiment black
And with terror torn,
Woe is me!—for yonder Persian host!"

Finally, at verse 155, Atossa enters and speaks, thus beginning the First Episode (Epeisodion). The dialogue begins in the old-fashioned trochaics. The leader of the chorus, who may speak as well as sing, greets Atossa:

Vss. 155-58. "O my queen, most high in station of deep-girded Persian dames,
Xerxes' venerable mother, hail to thee, Darius' wife.
Spouse unto a god of Persians, mother to a god wert thou:
—If the ancient evil genius hath not ruined yet the host!

Again impiety and foreboding of evil have struck their jarring notes. Presently dropping into the calmer iambics, Atossa relates a troublous dream of the past night:

Vss. 181-99. "Methought two women, beautifully drest,
Of whom the one in Persian robes was clad,
And one in Dorian, to my sight did come:
In stature noblest far of all that live,
And in their faultless beauty: of one race,
Sisters; but one had her allotted home
On Grecian earth, and on barbarian one.
Some strife arose, as I did think I saw,
Between these two. My son, perceiving it,
Restrained and soothed them: to his chariot
He yoked the twain, and on their necks he set
The collar. One took pride in this attire,
And held her mouth submissive to the rein.
The other strove, rent with her hands apart
And tore perforce the harness of the car,
Despite the bit, and broke the yoke in twain.

My son fell; and beside him stood his sire
Darius, pitying him. But Xerxes, when
He saw him, rent his robes about his form."

If the first dame is Persia, the recognition of kinship in the two contending nations is an astonishing evidence of Aischylos's large, philosophic mind. But it may only mean the easily subjugated Ionian Hellenes in Asia Minor. Tho actual sight, on awaking, of a hawk pursuing and pecking at an eagle, has not reassured the dowager queen. The chorus cannot comfort, but would fain divert her from gloomy thoughts. Presently she asks

Vss. 207-10.

"Where on the earth men say the town of Athens is.

Vss. 231-38.

Chorus. Far away where at his setting lordly Helios vanishes.

Atossa. Yet the longing seized indeed my son to hunt this city down?

Chorus. Ay, for so the whole of Hellas would be subject to the king.

Atossa. Such a mighty multitude of men is in their army, then?

Chorus. Such a host as has accomplished many evils for the Medes.

Atossa. What have they beyond this? Is there wealth sufficient in their home?

Chorus. They possess a silver spring, a treasure-chamber in the earth."

This is the first mention we have of the silver mines, still worked, at Laureion in Attica. Herodotos says Themistocles, all but single handed, had insisted that the new-found revenue must be spent for ships, not passed into the pockets of the several citizens: and that therefore Athens, alone, had a fleet ready to meet Xerxes.

Herod., vii., 144.

So early as verse 250 the messenger enters with the

bitterest tidings. He reminds us of the weary wounded horseman who in Aytoun's ballad brings "News of Flodden." His information has in part the accuracy of official archives:

Vss. 338-41. "So far as numbers went, know well, in ships
Stronger was the barbarian: for in all
On the Greek side were but three hundred sail,
And ten selected ones apart from them.
A thousand was the multitude, I know,
Which Xerxes led, and twice a hundred more
And seven, exceeding swift: so runs the tale."

The tricky message of Themistocles, which induced the king to close in and fight in the straits, is described, but neither he nor any other Greek is named in the play. The account of the battle rises to quite as lofty a key as Harry's speech on St. Crispin's Day:

Vss. 384-408. "But when indeed the day with her white steeds
Held all the earth, resplendent to behold,
First from the Greeks the loud-resounding din
Of song triumphant came; and shrill at once
Echo responded from the island rock.
Then upon all barbarians terror fell,
Thus disappointed: for not as for flight
The Hellenes sang the holy pæan then,
But setting forth to battle valiantly.
The bugle with its note inflamed them all:
And straightway with the dip of plashing oars
They smote the deep-sea water at command,
And quickly all were plainly to be seen.
Their right wing first in orderly array
Led on, and second all the armament
Followed them forth: and meanwhile there was heard
A mighty shout:
'Come, oh ye sons of Greeks,
Make free your country, make your children free,

Your wives, and fanes of your ancestral gods,
And your sires' tombs! For all we now contend!'
And from our side the rush of Persian speech
Replied. No longer might the crisis wait.
At once ship smote on ship with brazen beak;
A vessel of the Greeks began the attack,
Crushing the stern of a Phœnician ship."

Here again we suspect a definite allusion to a well-known incident, perhaps to a veteran hero even then sitting in the theatre. Yet all this, if clever, is surely also lofty art.

The regular alternation of Episodes, or scenes, with Stasima or choral Intermezzi, so clearly traceable in most later Attic dramas, is blurred as the excitement waxes. As was above intimated, also, the last hundred lines fall off wofully in dignity, and Xerxes is pusillanimous on the stage, as in real life—or rather we may say, more safely, as in Herodotos's pages. On the other hand, not even the shade of Hamlet's father treads the boards more manfully or fuller of life than Darius's ghost, conjured up from his funeral mound to prophesy yet worse evils to come. Plataia is distinctly foreshadowed by him when, speaking of the troops still left in Greece, he says:

Vss. 796-801. "They wait, where with his stream Asopos floods
The plain, enriching the Bœotians' land.
There crowning woes remain to be endured,
Rewards of insolence and godless thoughts:
Since, entering Grecian lands, they did not fear
To spoil the statues, burn the fanes, of gods."

The justice of the awful blow is thus avowed, as usual in tragedy, in the sufferer's name.

It is doubtful whether a better selection could have been made, if we must be limited to seven only of the master's rolls. The lost trilogy which we most desire to see

is the one made up of the "Myrmidons," "Nereids," and "Phrygians." These plays, named each from its chorus, must have traversed the ground covered by the chief scenes of the Iliad. Indeed the last bears a second name, "Ransoming of Hector." Two entire tetralogies, again, centred about Bacchos, especially the resistance offered to his triumphant progress through Greece as a youthful and rather lawless divinity.

But there is little expectation that we shall ever possess more than these seven dramas. Their difficult style, imperfect transmission through a single manuscript, and the lonely isolated spirit of Aischylos himself, bar with many and real obstacles the way to full enjoyment of his work: yet he who overcomes them has a lasting reward.

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CHAPTER XXIV

SOPHOCLES

THE eventful fifth century before Christ is nearly spanned by the long and happy life of this master-artist. Yet he clearly belongs to its middle generation, with Pericles and Phidias. We hear of him first, still but a beautiful boy, leading the dance, with lyre in hand, and chanting the pæan of victory after Salamis: that is, he never really shared in the fierce struggle of Aischylos's youthtime, to save Hellas from the yoke of an Oriental despot.

496–406 B.C.

Though he outlived Euripides by a few months, he seems to stand, with as large and tranquil a dignity as Pericles "the Olympian" himself, at the summit of the mid-century, and to have as little real affinity as the statesman, who was his friend, with those last three decades of siege and pestilence, of failing courage and weakened faith, of crumbling empire and ever-approaching ruin. This impression is strengthened by the noble statue now in the Lateran Museum of Rome, revealing him in full manly strength and beauty.

At his first appearance as a dramatist he won first honors over the veteran Aischylos. Thenceforward he was usually placed first, and never below second, of the three chosen each year for the competition. He produced about thirty "tetralogies"; but, as his plays were not connected in plot, he really composed fully one hundred and twenty separate dramatic works. This required only an average task of four or five lines a day, so long was his active career.

468 B.C. Plutarch, Kimon, §8.

He died in his ninetieth year, just in time to escape a share in the greatest humiliation Athens ever suffered: though the tale that the beleaguering host of Lysander actually drew aside, and gave his funeral train safe conduct from the city gate to his beloved native Colonos, a suburban village in the Attic plain, would make his death a year later still.

Pausanias, I., 21, 1, and Vita.

"Happy his end: no evil he endured,"

said a comic poet. His old age lacked not honor, nor the lyre: one of his greatest dramas, "Oidipus at Colonos," was left to be produced by his grandson and namesake. It is the play by reading from which he is said to have won an unanimous vote from the jury, when his son Iophon haled him into court as a dotard no longer able to have charge of his own property.

Vita, § 13.

Cicero de Senectute, §§ 7, 22, etc.

Sophocles's political life was not of great importance. Once at least he was chosen treasurer of the Delian league. He was one of Pericles's colleagues as general in the war with Samos, and was employed especially on diplomatic missions. At that time or earlier he met Herodotos, to whom he addressed an elegy, and from whom was probably borrowed a passage which seriously mars the Antigone. He also held a minor priesthood, which did not cut off a Greek gentleman from any social liberties. In Periclean Athens it was possible for a great genius to devote a lifetime wholly to one art, carried to ideal perfection for its own sake.

That he was Aischylos's pupil in tragedy is of course true, in some sense. He is credited with a few formal improvements in drama, besides the third actor and the increase of the chorus from twelve to fifteen members. But he found fully developed the art-form in which he could adequately express himself.

To the calmer, self-reliant Athens of Pericles's day the gods were evidently not so near, nor so intensely real, as to the storm-tost victors of Marathon and Salamis. Even heredity, though often mentioned, is not dominant as in Aischylos. In most of Sophocles's dramas humanity works out its own problems, with little need of intervention from Olympos. Sometimes this gives a certain coldness and loneliness to life, as when Antigone cries out in vain, to unresponsive skies, against the bitter doom that cuts her off untimely for one deed of plain and pious duty. Even the Furies, that in the Aischylean drama promptly rise to pursue Orestes, we seem to miss, though Sophocles may have written his "Electra" partly to insist that they must be omitted. The logic of his red-handed matricide is sound.

Vss. 1424-25.

"*Electra:* Orestes, how have ye sped?
Orestes: Here in the house
Well, if Apollo's oracle spake well."

Yet Dr. Holmes says wisely, that in certain crises the best evidence of a normal nature is to go mad. Some of Sophocles's figures, notably in this play of "Electra," impress us as almost like the calm, smiling statues of slayer and victim in the Æginetan pediments. In general, his art seems free from the heat, the fury, and also from the dæmonic resistless power, of Aischylos. To the poet Browning, to the eager Gothic spirit of aspiration, he appeals least of the Three. Yet he is of them all the most faultless. Indeed if we ignore a certain complex allusiveness, a too elaborate choice and combination of curious words—traits which sometimes strain the hearer's comprehension, as well as the flexible Attic syntax—we must call Sophocles the one consummate master of Greek vocabulary and of style, as of melody and versification. Aischylos may be extravagant, turgid, bombastic. Euripides can stoop almost to

vulgar commonplace. Sophocles neither rises nor sinks from the calm level of noble art.

Mature critics generally agree in accepting Matthew Arnold's characterization of Sophocles as the poet

"Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole."

His plots, and above all his characters, have a certain completeness which makes them seem at once real and imperishable. To recur to our metaphor, they are conceived and carved in the round and at full length. Here his art really conceals itself. Yet when in such work we do perceive a flaw, as in the noblest drama of all, it is peculiarly distressing. Naturally in Sophocles we can trace no such strides of progress as from the simple lyrical Suppliants of Aischylos to the full splendor of the Oresteia. In fact most of the extant plays by Sophocles are of unknown date.

The "Ajax" is regarded as the earliest, largely because of the inferior skill shown in the plot. The hero, maddened by the bestowal of the dead Achilles's armor on the crafty Odysseus as the worthier, has slain great flocks of sheep and goats, believing them to be the Atridæ and the other Greeks who have so flouted him. Recovering his senses, he takes a harrowing farewell of his son and the mother—a captive princess, and his slave—then rushes forth. Here the scene must have changed, for we listen to the long soliloquy after which he throws himself on his blade. This sword was a gift from Hector, after the indecisive duel in Iliad VII. By the belt which Ajax proffered him in return, Hector dead had been dragged at Achilles's chariot-wheels. Such grim jests of Nemesis appeal to men of every age.

Nearly half the play remains, and is chiefly filled with an unseemly dispute between Ajax's brother Teucer and the Atridæ. Both the latter are shown in an ignoble light,

being bent on casting Ajax's body forth unburied, as a traitorous foe. In the final scene Odysseus, whom Ajax had hated most of all, intercedes boldly, and wins a grudging consent for the performance of the due rites. Though Athena had appeared most needlessly, chatting with Odysseus, in the first scene, she is not brought on here, to decide a serious moral question. Clearly, there was no real division of Greek feeling : the dead body belonged to Earth, as the soul passed to the under-world. This question recurs in the Antigone.

The Electra has been mentioned. On this subject we have also a play of Euripides, so the three masters and their methods may be fairly compared. The purple patch in Sophocles's drama is the vivid fictitious description by Orestes, *incognito*, of his own death by accident in a chariot-race. The unflinching Electra and her gentle, shrinking sister make a contrast such as we find in the Antigone. The strongest natural feeling is shown in the recognition-scene between Electra and Orestes. The calm atmosphere of this piece is so alien to its plot that it finally comes to have a certain haunting horror of its own.

The Trachinians, least popular of the surviving Sophoclean plays, describes the last hours of Heracles, notably his sufferings from the poisoned garment sent him unwittingly by his wife, who believes it will restore his lost love for her. Both perish, she by her own hand, he, also voluntarily, on the great funeral pyre upon Mount Œta. The helpless captive Iolè, who has innocently caused all this trouble, is bestowed by the dying Heracles on his son Hyllos as his bride : an unpleasing bit of melodrama, as it seems to us.

The Philoctetes has a link of connection with the Trachinians. By setting a torch to the pyre and ending the sufferings of Heracles's mortal part, this young hero won the bow and arrows of the grateful demigod, with which

Troy itself had once been taken. Long after, toward the close of the famous strife in the Troad, it was revealed that the city could never be captured unless these same arms were present. But Philoctetes, on the outward voyage, bitten by a venomous serpent, had been left behind upon a lonely isle by the Greeks, who could not endure on shipboard the stench of the ulcer, and his ill-boding outcry.

Odysseus, with Neoptolemos, Achilles's son, has come to bring Philoctetes to camp. The sufferer scornfully refuses to aid his old comrades who have so heartlessly deserted him. By trickery he is deprived of his precious arms, and left helpless.

But here a most unexpected and unusual turn of affairs occurs. The nobler nature of Achilles's son asserts itself. Throwing off the influence of the wily and unscrupulous Odysseus, he casts in his lot with Philoctetes. The knot is finally cut by the apparition of Heracles, who bids Philoctetes go to win glory and honor in the Troad. His wound will be healed. He will slay Paris, and share in the sack of Troy.

The island and cave of Philoctetes make an unusual and effective scene in this play. There are also frequent allusions to outdoor sights and sounds. The character of Odysseus is as odious in this drama as was Agamemnon's in the Ajax. In general he is severely handled by the Attic tragedians.

There is a tantalizing essay of Chrysostom, written when he had just read carefully the three plays on this same subject, then extant, by Aischylos, Sophocles, and Euripides. He discusses with excellent taste the differing treatment of plot and characters: but of course gives us no adequate information on which to restore even the outline of the other two tragedies.

There remain to be discussed the three famous dramas

on Oidipus and Antigone. They are not in any proper sense a trilogy. Not only were they composed many years apart, but each is artistically complete, and there are even slight discrepancies in detail, enough to show that the successive works had each an independent origin in the poet's imagination.

The "Antigone," which is considered the earliest, was presumably performed shortly before Sophocles's election as general in 440, since the political wisdom uttered by Creon is said to have won him that distinction. The action begins on the morning after the death of Eteocles and Polyneikes, the sons of Oidipus, by each other's hand. Creon, uncle of Antigone, has succeeded to the throne. He has ordained that Polyneikes's body be cast forth to the dogs and vultures. Antigone speaks the first word, asking her gentle sister Ismene to aid her in defying the decree and burying their outlawed brother. By contrast the heroic Antigone appears, to some readers, hard. A closer study should dispel that impression. The first line seems an eager utterance of sisterly tenderness, in the form of a climax:

"Kinswoman,—sister mine,—Ismene's self!"

Ismene follows her nature, and submits to Creon's command: yet after the deed is done she attempts to share the blame and the penalty. She too had a noble womanly character. There is a touch of lofty scorn in Antigone's words, as she goes forth alone: but all is done, and said, in love and duty.

This conversation is the Prologue of the play. The chorus, to heighten Antigone's isolation, is composed of aged citizens, faithful always to the king. The long and beautiful Parodos is a song of pious rejoicing over deliverance from the invaders. Yet there is a glimpse at a calm group of statuesque shapes in such a passage as

Vss. 148-54. "Now, for Victory comes,—a glorious name—
Greeting with responsive smile
Many-charioted Thebes,
Winning from our wars release
Let us seek forgetfulness,
Let us with our night-long dances
Visit all the temples of the gods.
Bacchos, making Thebes to tremble, lead us on!"

The artist, at any rate, joins no mad Dionysiac rout, but remains calm, contemplative, unshaken. It is somewhat such a poise and steadfastness in his heroine also that makes a few think her unfeminine. She faces the indignant king, herself a guarded prisoner under the shadow of ignominious death: and towers above him, in all his pompous state, as she proclaims:

Vss. 451-68. "But Justice, dwelling with the gods below,
Has not established laws like these for men;
Nor did I deem thy edicts had such force,
So that a mortal man might override
The unwritten changeless statutes of the gods.
They are not of to-day or yesterday,
But live eternal: none know whence they came.
I would not, dreading any mortal's pride,
Be punished by the gods for breaking these.
I knew I was to die,—why should I not?—
Even if thou proclaim'dst it not; and if
I die before my time, I count it gain
. . . But if my mother's son
I had left, a corpse, unburied after death,
That would have grieved me. . . ."

In the remark "None know whence they came" we have very likely a hint of that cool, fearless agnosticism, and disbelief in the myths, which Pericles, Aspasia, Anaxagoras, the young Socrates, possible Pheidias, and others of their enlightened circle, would naturally hold. Happily

for us, Sophocles as a dramatist, at least, was able to resist such destructive scepticism sufficiently to utilize the same tales of eld in his calmer art. Thus the blind seer Tiresias, who finally breaks the king's stubborn will, is truly guided, through the voices of birds, by the remoter divine powers. To raise a doubt, there, would have been a grievous sin: against the laws of art. So in Shakespeare's Winter's Tale the Delphic oracle is infallible.

The struggle, in this play, is very real and tragic, because Creon also is perfectly sincere, and free from all doubts. Indeed, he is right in most of his arguments, though they are applied to a case where he should not have exercised his authority. There are few better statements of civic duty, in some cases, than his:

Vss. 673-78. "No ill is worse than disobedience.
This ruins towns, and makes homes desolate.
This turns to rout the embattled line: of those
Unharmed, obedience saves the greater part.
Therefore must we uphold good government,
—And never by a woman be controlled.

In this last *non sequitur* we are reminded how by quiet touches the masterly character-drawing is accomplished. The querulous, self-assertive, narrow uncle, his long exasperation over the girl's superior nature, peers suddenly through royal splendor and weighty rhetoric. The words are addressed to Creon's own son, Antigone's betrothed, whose passionate resentment hastens, and intensifies, the tragic finale. We can hardly believe that young Haimon's answering appeal to the king should have no effect:

Vss. 690-95. . . . "Thy visage terrifies the common man . . .
But I can hear these murmurs in the dark,
And how the city for this girl laments,
Saying, 'Most innocent of womankind
She dies, dishonored, for heroic deeds.'" . . .

Antigone's pessimistic utterances about life are excused by the horrors that have crowded her own experience, they are perfectly sincere at the moment, and they help to carry her more easily over the hour of masculine action, and the trying scene of her arraignment. But when all this is past she pauses with reluctant feet ere she passes to her living tomb, bewailing in long and harrowing strains this untimely departure, before she has known the real life of woman, wedlock and motherhood.

Once imprisoned, she promptly hangs herself with her scarf. This gives an elegiac pathos to the finale, very like the half-accidental death of Romeo and Juliet. Creon, when his heart relents, arrives just too late to rescue Antigone or to save his son—and therefore his wife also—from suicide.

The end, then, is somewhat embittered and disconsolate. Yet Antigone has her reward in the stately immortality of her woe—like Niobe's, to use Sophocles's own comparison—while Creon, surely, is adequately punished for an error which, however grievous, sprang rather from congenital temper than from perversity of will.

Vss. 823-33.

The choral songs in this and other plays of Sophocles are beautiful in themselves, and nowise inappropriate in tone and spirit. They must have added greatly to the general artistic effect of the performance. They are, however, not an integral and necessary part of the action and plot. Often they are in a sententious moralizing tone, equally fitted to mark an interlude in any grave drama, or, again, to stand alone, like an ode of Simonides. This may be illustrated from the most famous of all these Intermezzi:

Vss. 332-42.

"Marvels are many, yet of them none more
wonderful than man we find.
He traverses the wintry sea, gray beneath the Southern wind,

Under the billows' threatening crest.
Earth, of gods the mightiest,
Unwearied, knowing not decay,
He wasteth toilfully away,
As year by year the ploughs go round,
With the offspring of horses upturning the ground."

We are disposed to pronounce this drama of less than fourteen hundred verses as nearly perfect as any human creation can be, but for one undoubted blot. This is a passage of about ten lines in a deliberate utterance of the heroine after her sentence. "I would not, if a mother," she says to the gray-bearded townsmen, "have resisted thus my citizens, for the sake of child or husband. 'Why so?' you may ask. Because losing either I might win another: but our parents are in Hades, and another brother I can never have." This is surely absurd, illogical, hopelessly beneath the simple nobility of her earlier words. Since the blemish is not ingrained in the white marble of the plot and character, but a mere smirch from without, most editors efface it by suppressing the verses.

Vss. 905-14.

Yet they are certainly referred to, without disapproval, as well known, by Aristotle a century later. Exactly the same motive, in a less perverse and inadequate form, occurs in an episode of the history of Herodotos, in whom we know the poet was warmly interested. We rejoice that Professor Jebb still persists in ascribing the ignoble and ill-written verses to Iophon, to the younger Sophocles, to anyone rather than to the arbiter of Periclean taste, to the most Attic and dignified of poets.

Rhetoric, III., 16.

Herod., III., 119.

Supra, p. 204.

The beauties of the Antigone cannot be culled in extracts. Excepting a few passages, of which we have discussed by far the worst, it deserves to be studied lovingly

word by word, and finally learned by heart. Some details of the larger Theban myth into which it fits are abhorrent to many minds, and are much more prominent in the drama which we must next analyze.

The play oftenest cited, and no less often alluded to indirectly, in Aristotle's "Poetics" and by ancient critics generally, as the masterpiece of plot, is "Oidipus the King." The scene is many years earlier: in Antigone's childhood. One large improbability we may indeed descry in the background: Why should Oidipus rule Thebes for many a year, and become the father of four children, without tracking down the slayers of Laios, to whose crown and wife he has himself fallen heir? A pestilence in the land, and an edict from the Delphic oracle, forced him to this belated duty. Even the circumstances of the slaying seem new to him, when now related.

Thus started, the tale unfolds with swift and inevitable progress. In rapid succession come the revelations, that Oidipus is himself no Corinthian prince by birth, but a foundling from the hills, that he, single-handed, on his way toward Thebes, and not a band of robbers, had met, quarrelled with, and slain the imperious Laios, in a narrow rocky pass: and lastly Oidipus learns that he himself is that son of Laios whose begettal was forbidden, whose parents thought him duly slain, as they commanded, on the day of his birth.

Thus in an hour the wisest, happiest, most self-confident of men has grown aweary of the daylight. His wife, with prompter comprehension of the truth, has already slain herself. With her golden brooch he puts out his eyes, and begs to be cast forth as a polluted creature from the land of his wretched birth.

As to the power of this drama there can be no question. Yet we may still ask, Does it offer us any helpful lesson, or any high consolation, as adequate recompense for the

tale of horrors through which it must be attained? To most modern readers the Antigone, or even the Alkestis, is from this point of view far more satisfying. Perhaps there were traits in Oidipus's character that brought his doom upon him: but the myth makes him rather the scapegoat of his parents' errors, the helpless plaything of a Fate, a Nemesis, which he cannot evade. This is too heavy a heritage of evil to be just, unless there is at least a spiritual escape. The warning of the Delphic god, that he was to slay his father and wed his mother, had itself denied him any hope, and as a matter of fact, by making him resolve never to return to Corinth, had hastened its own fulfilment.

The chorus, in the final lines of this play, failing to find any larger or more helpful meaning, emphasizes the commonplace thought that fortune is fickle, and echoes a saying attributed to Solon—which, again, Sophocles *may* have read on an early page of Herodotos, as well as heard from Aischylos in the Agamemnon.

Herod., i., 32.

"Dwellers in our Theban city, gaze ye here on Oidipus!
He the famous riddle solved, and was of men the mightiest.
Who of all our folk unenvious looked upon his happy lot?
Now into how wild a billow of disaster is he plunged!
Therefore, holding fixt before our eye the final day of doom,
No man shall we hail as happy, who of mortal race is born,
Ere he pass, exempt from pain, across the boundary of life."

Sophocles would seem in later years to have grown dissatisfied with his own picture of Oidipus. Possibly that closing verse reminded him that the story of his hero's life was not fully told.

That the "Oidipus Coloneus" was composed by a man of

ninety seems hardly credible, but we would gladly believe in so fruitful and peaceful an end to the artist's long career. He seems nowise embittered by the calamities of the Peloponnesian War, the irrecoverable decline of Athens's power, the ignoble demagoguery of Cleon and his kind. The political life of his city in the past still rouses all his loving pride. His Theseus we may well imagine to have the traits of Pericles. Yet there are many lines, not only of aged Oidipus himself, but uttered by the chorus—which is in some sense the poet's own voice—that confess readiness to depart:

Vss. 1211-20.

"Whoso craves a longer span,
When a moderate life is past,
Plainly is he seen by me
Cleaving unto foolishness:
Since the lengthening days shall bring
Much that unto grief is nearer:
Joys that shall he behold no more,
He whose life perchance has glided
Farther than its flitting close."

In this play Oidipus is many years older. Cast out from Thebes as a useless burden, he has wandered long, homeless, guided by Antigone, succored or kept informed from time to time by her sister, who has remained in Thebes.

On the last morning of his life he comes near Athens, and rests in the sacred grove of the Eumenides at Colonos. He sees his own past as a whole, more calmly than of old. His burden of guilt, or even of misfortune, no longer seems too heavy for mortal to bear. Much high consolation comes to him in these unusually long and varied scenes. He is desired by all the contending parties which distract Thebes, but the well-omened burial-place of the illustrious wanderer is to be in Attic earth, its exact loca-

tion known only to kingly Theseus, who shall transmit it to his successors.

This local myth of Colonos was no invention of Sophocles. How the Theban legend came to take root there we do not know, Of course it gave the poet an opportunity to glorify his birthplace. The little hillock of Colonos is still an interesting point in the Attic plain, though bare of vegetation, and without monuments of art save the gravestones of two modern archæologists. It is still a favorable spot to hear the bird-songs of early spring. Oidipus finds there a grove,

Vss. 16–18.

> "thick set
> With olive, laurel, vines: and deep within
> Sings sweet the feathered choir of nightingales."

We hear the last sigh of weary age in such lines as

Vss. 106–10.

> "Come, ye sweet daughters of primeval gloom,
> And thou, who art known as mightiest Pallas' town,
> Athens, among all cities honored most,
> Pity this wretched shade of Oidipus:
> For surely this is not my former frame."

Yet the dramatist, more than almost all other artists, may protest against our merging him in any of his characters. We may at least say, that extreme old age is here perfectly and nobly represented. The one certain personal touch is the tender love expressed alike for Colonos and for Athens.

Of Sophocles's lost plays we cannot speak at length. A curious interest would attach to his dramatic rendering of the Phæacian episode in the Odyssey. He not only filled acceptably the rôle of the young princess Nausicaa, but especially distinguished himself by his grace in the dancing and the ball-play. We may safely count this among his earlier triumphs. In middle life he gave up acting, the

reason assigned being his inadequate voice. The great open-air theatre must have strained the best of lungs: but about this time professional actors appear, and the protagonist is even mentioned in the memorial inscriptions as early as 456 B.C.

In Sophocles Attic drama approaches perfection. Even the refusal to connect his three plays as one chain of events was doubtless right, and is justified by the result. The individual life, or character, is the one supremely interesting subject for us, an inherited curse is but an incident, not the chief key to the human mysteries. With the severe limitations imposed by tradition, in the absence of all violent action and realistic scene, the psychological problem could be stated, and solved, in the single play of from one to two thousand verses. Modern dramatists, notably Shakespeare, with crowded stage, and much more detailed realistic character-studies, require far more space. Even so the Doric temple is perfect, within its limitations. The Gothic pointed arch and spire rise higher Heavenward—or toward the unattainable,—detail is multiplied, there is always space for more columns, more statues, more semi-isolated shrines and altar-pieces.

Since Shakespeare's day even this larger dramatic frame has been broken, and our prose romance in three volumes is none too ample a space for Thackeray or George Eliot. Browning's "The Ring and the Book," with all the compression of a master's style and of the poetic form, is actually longer than the fourteen extant Greek tragedies of the two elder masters all together.

Perhaps this is all liker to Nature, which never ends nor finishes. Sophocles was a classic artist, who attained his ideal. He never attempted to treat the purely divine myths, nor contemporary history. Heroic man is his sole theme. We would eagerly welcome almost any one of his lost plays, confident that his art would set Phaidra, Niobe,

or Danaë, the Argonautic heroes, or, best of all, the dim, graceful shapes of Attic legend like Aigeus, Oreithuia, and Triptolemos, clearly, nobly, statuesquely before us. But his own position is fully fixt and assured. He and his fellow-craftsman Pheidias, standing on either side of the statesman whose name marks their epoch, represent the best attainment of Attic genius, the three loftiest spheres of creative human activity: statecraft, literature, plastic art.

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CHAPTER XXV

EURIPIDES

(480–406 B.C.)

EURIPIDES, last of the three surviving tragic poets, was said to have been born on Salamis, during the decisive battle for freedom, when his mother, like the homeless folk of Attica generally, was in temporary exile upon the little island. This legend was probably an invention, devised because only thus could he be associated with the spot where Aischylos fought and the youthful Sophocles led the dance about the trophy of victory.

The supreme rank of these three is no accident of survival. When news of Euripides's death reached Athens, Sophocles bade his chorus appear in mourning for him; and a few months later, when both were in the under-world, Aristophanes, in his comedy the "Frogs," makes the god Dionysos follow them thither, and beg Pluto to restore to earth one of the three dramatists, worthy to grace the annual contest at his festival. This testimony, from the lifelong enemy and ridiculer of Euripides, is borne out by all the evidence we have.

Euripides was probably of good Attic stock, the stories of his parents' poverty being inventions of the comic poets. He was one of the first to collect a large library. He was carefully educated, at first as an athlete, from a misunderstanding of an oracle to the effect that he was to "win prizes in contests." It is curious that the fiercest of diatribes against athletes is quoted from one of his lost plays. He also developed youthful skill, like his friend Socrates, as a

sculptor. At twenty-five he first obtained the honor of competing as one of the three chosen poets at the Dionysia.

He did not, however, like the young Sophocles, win at once the popular heart. At his first venture he was placed last. He secured highest honors not once until fourteen years later, and only five times altogether. Yet toward the end of his life, and after his death, his influence, not merely in Athens, but throughout Greek lands, was unrivalled. It is no accident, that seven dramas of Aischylos, seven of Sophocles, nineteen of Euripides, have been preserved for us. The Alexandrian grammarians had four times as many of his plays, and he is said to have composed twenty-three tetralogies: ninety-two dramas. In Euripides's case, as in Sophocles's, each play was doubtless an independent and complete work of art.

No worthy successors to this brief line ever arose. The three, and their forgotten rivals, filled the fifth century before Christ with their splendor. The likeness among them all should strike a modern student before their differences. All their plays graced the greatest state festival and were a part of the popular religious ceremonial. All, save Aischylos's "Persians," no real exception in its spirit, claim to represent a remote heroic age. The characters are chiefly gods or the immediate offspring of gods. The vain struggle of man against Fate is always a motive, usually the chief thread of the tale. As to outward form, also, the chorus remains, to the end, the central feature, though its importance is steadily lessened. The small number of actors, the stiffness of mask and buskin, the simple stage-setting, the avoidance of violent or confused action, continued little modified.

Still, there has been a very general conviction in ancient and modern times, first voiced effectively by Aristophanes, that Euripides was a radical innovator, both in art and in religion. Of course this is necessarily true in some degree

of any creative artist. But the question goes much deeper.

The generation that saw the terrific invading host of Xerxes melt away like a dream, while Athens arose from her ashes to become queen of the Ægean and the foremost state in the Greek world, could hardly escape a fervent belief in divine guidance of all earthly affairs. We have seen how Aischylos, himself a Marathonian warrior, stamped upon tragedy much of his own intensely religious nature. His human characters often seem almost helpless in the grip of stern but just Fate.

In Sophocles the gods are rarely seen. Man is subject indeed to their rule, but he usually works out his own doom of ill or happiness by ways not inscrutable. In the prosperous period of Kimon and Pericles which formed his early maturity, Athens doubtless felt herself quite capable of accomplishing her own destiny.

Euripides lived through the same period. But he was not so harmonious and happy a nature. The pathos of life, the capriciousness of destiny, the seemingly unjust distribution of human lots, distressed and perplexed him. This may not have been so largely true of his earlier work. We have only one play (the "Alkestis") previous to his fiftieth year. At that very time began the great national tragedy of the Thirty Years' War, destined to end in the utter humiliation and downfall of imperial Athens. The plague and the death of Pericles made even the beginnings of the great strife seem tragic. The appalling disaster in Sicily foreshadowed the end, and indeed made it inevitable, long years before it came. It is not strange if the Athenian poet of that darkening day often doubted the divine wisdom, or felt a strife, which his art could not reconcile, between man and Providence.

Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.

413 B.C.

Whatever the reason, the gods do take again a prominent

share in Euripidean as in Aischylean drama; but they often, perhaps usually, act from less noble motives than the human characters. It has been maintained, especially by a living English scholar, Professor Verrall, that Euripides made it his life-long purpose to undermine and destroy any belief in the real existence of Zeus and Apollo, Pallas Athene, and all their kin: that he was an aggressive agnostic, using the forms of the traditional gods only to show their helplessness, their imbecility, their impossibility.

The most plausible example for such a thesis is found in the Ion. The scene is laid at Delphi. Ion is a pure-minded, boyish acolyte of the god. But his very existence, and all the distracting problems of the harrowing play, are due to an act of Apollo himself: a crime so violent and lawless that among men, in all ages, it has been fitly punished, when possible, by a summary and merciless death penalty.

But surely the generation that slew Socrates, for "introducing strange gods and not honoring those of the state," would have detected and resented any such flagrant misuse of the holy place and day to inculcate atheism. Moreover, any such life-long cynicism would have corroded the artistic powers themselves. Lucian, Voltaire, Swift, illustrate this truth. Many of the pessimistic outbursts often cited as Euripides's own are uttered *in character* by his sufferers and sinners, and are mere half-conscious cries of distress or protest. His dramatic power was not always sufficient to recast the old myths in an ethical form which satisfied him. He knew men and women thoroughly, loved them, found them heroic, generous, noble—and he so painted them. The gods, whom he did not know, fared worse at his hands. Often one is introduced in spectacular fashion at the close, to cut the knot which the poet had failed to untie in the natural course of his plot. Even Sophocles, once at least, in the Philoctetes, does very much

the same thing. That Euripides, even while using some myths, expresses, through his puppets, his disapproval, seems clear. That indicates a failure to reconcile himself and his material: a grave fault in the artist. But the cry, "The gods should be more wise than human kind" reveals a sincere, distracted soul.

Hippolytos, vs. 120.

In general, Euripides seems distinctly inferior to his two masters, at their best, in construction, in plot. We still laugh, with Aristophanes, at Euripides's long narrative prologues. His messengers' speeches, fine as they are, seem almost epic in their broad descriptions of what we have not seen. Yet here again the fictitious chariot-race in the Sophoclean Electra is a most flagrant example. The discussions, whether in single-line repartee or set harangues pro and con, show a lawyer's cleverness, but do not always help on either the main plot or the delineation of character. Worst of all is the attempt, in the recognition-scene of the Electra, to criticise and ridicule the methods of his two great predecessors. Such a temper is permitted only in avowed satire or farcical comedy.

Vide infra, p. 253.

On the other hand, in romantic lyric, in picturesque description, in pathos, in his sympathy with elemental human feelings, Euripides has no Attic rival whatever. His women, his slaves, his humbler characters generally, are evidently drawn with especial tenderness. He is perhaps so far a "realist" in his art that he should not have been restricted to the stately figures and famous names of the national myths. Much of his work seems more fitted to frankly contemporaneous drama. He *is* drawing men and women whom he has known, and should be allowed to say so. His fussy old nurse in the Hippolytos, his homely rustic husband of Electra, certainly cannot be set upon a pedestal.

But should a work of art, above all of dramatic art, be



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set upon any pedestal at all? Should not the dramatist, rather, hold the mirror up to nature, bid living men and women walk and talk before us? It is in part the old antagonism, real or supposed, of Idealism, or Classicism, against Realism, that has raged so long about the name of Euripides. There is much to be said, and truly said, on both sides: but certainly Euripides is, for us, by far the most modern of the Attic dramatists. He influenced far more than any other the later course of his art. Even the so-called New Comedy, the social melodrama of Menander, Philemon, and their school, owed more to him than to Aristophanes. He dominated the Roman tragic stage, and has exerted a mighty power even upon the modern form and spirit of drama.

His claim to be a great ethical teacher cannot be successfully disputed. Whatever we may think of his divinities, the world is not the worse but better,—to use Browning's lines:

> "Because Euripides shrank not to teach,
> If gods be strong and wicked, man, though weak,
> May prove their match by willing to be good."

Primarily and chiefly, however, he is a poet, though perhaps not, by nature, a dramatist. His pictures are vivid, his characters are alive, they speak, usually, in their own voices, and are a part of the mimic scene. There are, indeed, instants when we hear, beyond or through them, a sigh from the poet's own soul; the cry of a perplexed truth-seeker in an age of doubt and discouragement. Thus there is no adequate dramatic reason for Hecuba's apostrophe:

> "O Thou
> That bearest earth, Thyself by earth upborne,
> Whoe'er Thou art, hard for our powers to guess,
> Or Zeus, or Nature's law, or mind of man,
> To thee I pray, for all the things of earth
> In right Thou guidest on Thy noiseless way."

Such passages are not rare, especially in choral odes. It is never perfectly safe to ascribe them directly to Euripides the man, least of all when quoting from a lost play, where the very sentiment cited may have been signally refuted.

As we associate Aischylos first of all with the suffering Titan Prometheus, and Sophocles with the stately figure of an Oidipus or an Antigone, proudly facing the blows of fate with human courage, so the pathetic, even elegiac tale of Hippolytos is the most characteristic Euripidean study. Here for the first time the passion of love is made the central motive of a great poem. Here, too, every human character is fearless in life and in death, while the gods are quarrelsome, vindictive, and ignoble. It is the very play on which Aristophanes lavished oftenest his biting wit and ridicule. It was performed in 428 B.C., and appealed to the audience as an Attic myth, centred about their great legendary king Theseus, who is a pivotal though not a leading character.

Hippolytos, Theseus's son by the captive Amazon queen, is a beautiful, chaste young athlete, devoted to the hunt, and so a devotee of Artemis, but scornful toward Aphrodite, the queen of sensual love. She, therefore, appearing in a spectacular prologue, declares that she will inspire his stepmother, Phaidra, with a mad passion for him.

Vss. 42–50. "To Theseus I will show, and prove, this truth.
The sire himself shall slay the youth, my foe,
. . . And she, though innocent, shall perish too,
—Phaidra,—nor do I count her pain so dear
But that mine enemies must pay to me
Full retribution!"

Against this divinely—or shall we say, demoniacally?—inspired passion Phaidra makes a stubborn womanly resistance, and determines rather to starve herself to death

than reveal it. On the third day the old nurse, by persistence and craft, extorts the secret from her fainting mistress, and promptly makes it known, to save Phaidra's life, to Hippolytos himself. The young ascetic pours out his horror in bitterly unjust words, and rushes away to meet his absent father and accuse the wife.

Phaidra has overheard him, unseen, and her wild Cretan blood is stirred to frenzy. She slays herself, and her husband finds in her clenched hand a letter accusing Hippolytos. Theseus rashly calls upon his own father, the god Poseidon, to slay this undutiful child. The sea-lord must keep his promise to grant three wishes to his son, though he condemns that son's hasty imprecation. Hippolytos passing into exile is overtaken by a terrific billow, whence a bull sent by Poseidon issues and fatally wounds him. He returns to die in Theseus's presence. Artemis appears in a final tableau to reproach Theseus. She promises Hippolytos to slay some equally innocent mortal favorite of Aphrodite in requital.

A madder system of superhuman government, surely, was never outlined, even in Aristophanes's own realm of Cloudcuckooville. But these divinities, after all, supply merely a spectacular tableau at the beginning and end, and the pathetic elegiac motive. Their appearance clears Phaidra, Hippolytos, even Theseus, of all fault.

The nobler tone is supplied in the splendid courage displayed by men and women, even by the old attendants, even by the messenger who tells the prince's mishap, and faces fearlessly the unforgiving sire:

Vss. 1249–54. "I am a slave within thy house, O king,
But this at least I never will believe,
That he, thy son, was guilty: not although
The whole of womankind go hang themselves,
And with their letters fill the pines that grow
On Ida!"

Throughout the play there are fresh glimpses of outdoor life, fragrant breezes blown from glen and sea. Strange far-off visions of enchantment arise at the magician's call. Here again Aristophanes in the "Birds" offers the only rivals of scenes worthy to be mentioned with "Midsummer Night's Dream" itself. And yet again, Phaidra's plea for death to destroy the mad desire that horrifies her wifely heart, the youthful athlete's piteous plea to his frenzied steeds as they trample upon their beloved master; these are realism of the noblest kind. Moreover, all these varied pictures are included in a play not fifteen hundred lines in length!

The choral songs in the Euripidean dramas are often of wonderful beauty. Yet not only are they usually unessential, as was remarked of Sophocles's also, they are often elaborated until they make a wide digression from the plot, which they sometimes interrupt at crises of the drama when our eager curiosity grows restive. Yet we can hardly refuse our gratitude for these lyric gems in themselves. The Stasima of the "Hippolytos" are especially famous. Briefest of all is the prayer to the Greek god of love: a taller, swifter, more redoubtable archer, in plastic art, than the chubby Roman Cupids with their toy bows and arrows.

Vss. 525-34.

"Eros, thou whose eyes with longing
Overflow, who sweet delight
Bringest to the soul thou stormest,
Come not, prithee, sorrow-laden,
Nor too mighty unto me!
Neither flaming fire is stronger,
Nor the splendor of the stars,
Than the shaft of Aphrodite,
Darted from the hand of Eros,
Who is child of Zeus supreme."

And yet, exquisite as such strains are, the living faith of

an Aischylos never inspired them. They are simply the graceful text prepared to accompany a dainty melody.

Better known, and simpler in its plot than the "Hippolytos," is Euripides's earliest extant play, the "Alkestis." The god Apollo, atoning for homicide, in human fashion, by year-long absence from his Olympian home, speaks the prologue. His kindly young host, Admetos, King of Thessalian Pherai, can escape the untimely death appointed to him only by finding a willing substitute. His parents have declined the honor, his lovely wife claims it. The fatal day is come. Especially famous is the morning scene:

Vss. 158–82. "For when she knew the fatal day was come,
She bathed in river water her white flesh.
And from her chests of cedar choosing forth
Raiment and ornament she decked her fair,
And standing prayed before the hearthstone thus:
'O Goddess,—for I pass beneath the earth,—
Here at the last, a suppliant, I entreat
Rear thou my children, and on him bestow
A loving wife, on her a noble spouse.
And may they not, as I their mother die,
Untimely fall, but in their native land,
And fortunate, fill out a happy life.'
And all the shrines throughout Admetos' halls,
She sought, and decked with boughs, and prayed thereto,
Breaking the foliage of the myrtle twigs.
Nor wept, nor groaned; the sorrow near at hand
Changed not the lovely color of her face.
Then hastened to her marriage-room and bed;
There she indeed shed tears, and thus she spoke:
'O couch, where I put off my maiden zone
For this my husband, for whose sake I die,
Farewell. I hate thee not: thou hast destroyed
Me only; slow to leave my spouse and thee
I die. To thee another wife will come,
Not truer, though perchance more fortunate.'"

That this last line was famous we know, because Aristophanes ten years later parodied it in his comedy of "The Knights." Yet the dying Alkestis is one of the most noble and pathetic figures in literature. It was popular at once, for only thrice-familiar poems are parodied. Milton felt its power, as a famous sonnet reveals. Mr. Browning has made it the centre of his great imaginative poem, "Balaustion's Adventure." This character should alone suffice to protect Euripides from the epithet of "woman-hater," first cast at him by the most audacious scoffer at women who ever lived.

There are cruel and wicked women in Euripides, though none approaches Aischylos's Clytaimnestra. The most terrible of them is Medea, who murders her own children to punish their unfaithful father, Jason the Argonaut. Even her action is adequately justified, in a dramatic sense. That is, it is made quite credible, that a wronged woman, with the blood of gods and savages in her veins, should do the deeds she dares. Meantime even her motherly passion is described with extraordinary power.

The ethical question hardly comes up at all. The capital fault of the play is, that we have no adequate reward at last for all the horrors we have undergone. Indeed, Medea is promised safe refuge in Athens, and the innocent Corinthians are bidden to atone for her deeds. In truth, Medea is, in earlier forms of the myth, merely sinned against. Euripides's love of striking contrasts often, perhaps too often, tempted him into making a seemingly defenceless woman's hand deal the decisive stroke of fate.

So in the "Hecabe," the Trojan queen, dethroned, enslaved, bereft of all her dearest ones, strikes an unexpected and deadly blow at the most cruel and selfish of men, the Thracian king who for love of gold has murdered his guest, her young son, Polydoros. The comparatively noble Agamemnon, who fights for just revenge, or

slays the innocent only at superhuman command, is made the half-willing tool of her imperial vengeance.

Supra, p. 136. The curious treatment of Helen has been already mentioned. After utilizing Menelaos's faithless queen as an ignoble and much-berated character in several plays, Euripides gives her the title-rôle in a drama intended to rescue her character. It is but a wraith that Paris has wooed and defended for twenty years. Happier than the many heroes who perish in her defence, she herself has been living safe, and innocent, all these years, under enchantment, in Egypt, the abode of mystery. Here Menelaos, sailing homeward triumphant with her *eidolon*, is made doubly happy by receiving instead a stainless Helen once more. This strange myth, if we can accept it, at least effaces in some degree our indignant sense of injustice, when the ever-youthful daughter of Zeus appears in the Odyssey reigning happily once more over a contented people and a submissive husband.

Among Euripides's happiest works is the "Tauric Iphigenia." It is less "tragical," as we classify our plays, than the "Merchant of Venice." This daughter of Agamemnon, miraculously snatched away and saved by Artemis, at whose altar she was being sacrificed to win fair voyage to Troy for the Greeks, has since then for many years been the priestess in the goddess's Crimean temple, where all strangers are doomed to death. Hither wander at last her own brother, the matricide Orestes, and his happier friend Pylades. Before she learns their names she undertakes to save one of the twain, if he will take a letter to her Hellenic kin. The generous pair insist, each that the other shall save his life. Thus Orestes's name reached his sister's ear. After the famous scene of recognition, the trio succeed in eluding the king's vigilance, and make their escape by ship. Goethe, in his beautiful recasting of this myth, offended at the use of vulgar deception by Iphigenia,

makes her appeal successfully to the generosity of her barbarian lover. The happy outcome, as in this play, is by no means rare on the "tragic" stage.

At the end of his life Euripides returned to this heroine, to depict the earlier scene of sacrifice at Aulis. The play seems to have been left unfinished, and many lines have been added by a weaker hand. Still, the fearless princess, facing death cheerfully for the honor of her people, is a most pathetic figure, and was used with thrilling effect in the memorial Harvard oration of James Russell Lowell, who compared to her the glad young warriors of the Civil War.

The return of the poet to a theme already used, as was said, in an earlier year, doubtless illustrated the narrow range of myths acceptable to his audience. So all the great three wrote on Phaidra and Hippolytos, on Electra and Orestes, on Philoctetes and his bow. Euripides's late play, the "Bacchantes," is by a curious chance our only example of a drama treating what was in the early drama long the only permissible subject. Dionysos's own Theban kin refuse to recognize him as a god, and are terribly punished. This play was produced not for the Athenians, but for a Thessalian tyrant's court.

The courageous surrender of life at the altar, or under similar conditions, is repeated in a number of plays, and may remind us of the startling truth, that human sacrifice was not absolutely unknown, even in the most enlightened age of historical Hellas. Polyxena, in the Hecabe, is more forlorn than Iphigenia, since she actually perishes, at a foeman's hand, and without the faintest hope of saving even her mother and sisters from slavery, much less of restoring her native city from its ashes. The poet who created such noble and inspiring types of women deserves the eternal gratitude of all who love and honor heroic wives and mothers.

It is not necessary to discuss in detail all the nineteen Euripidean plays. The Phoinissai, when compared with Aischylos's "Septem" or Sophocles's "Antigone," illustrates the more modern, romantic qualities of our poet. Though nearly eighteen hundred lines long, it seems crowded with incident and characters. The dying reconciliation between the hostile brothers is a master-stroke of pathos. The chorus of Phœnician captives served at least to introduce better the allusions to Cadmos, the sphinx, etc. Yet few indeed, among Hellenists, would prefer this hurrying, changeful scene to Antigone's fearless deed and lonely death-song in Sophocles's masterpiece.

The Troades is little more than a panorama, or long frieze, in which loose-linked scenes are vividly portrayed. We get the impression, that the development of scenery and stage effects, doubtless stimulated by comedy and by the audacious Aristophanic fancy, has affected the literary artist disastrously.

The lack of unity is more painfully felt in the powerful "Heracles Mad," which is really two dramatic episodes of the hero's life, loosely tied to each other. In the "Suppliants" a direct political propaganda against Thebes seriously mars the dramatic effect. Perhaps the "Orestes" marks the lowest degradation of its characters generally from the old heroic tradition. The wilful treatment of Menelaos in this piece has drawn the direct censure of Aristotle. In general, Euripides's fame would have been better protected by ten or twelve of the best plays than by the nineteen we possess. Yet even the weakest has some notable beauty. In the "Heracleidai," Macaria sacrifices herself for a brother's sake, more calmly than Iphigenia or Antigone. Such scenes still recall the poet at his best.

The "Cyclops" is of especial interest to students as the

only satyr-drama, or semi-comic afterpiece, which has been preserved. It is not like the Attic comedies proper. Indeed, the chief figure, Odysseus, is not made ludicrous at all. The satyrs are inclined to buffoonery, and occasional vulgarity. The poet's strongest interest does not seem to be enlisted.

The brief play entitled "Rhesos" is a direct transcript from an episode of the Iliad: the only such drama transmitted to us. The authorship of the "Rhesos" has been doubted, on many grounds. It is probably a fourth-century drama from an unknown hand, and is sufficiently commonplace to reconcile us in some degree to the loss of the countless Greek tragedies read and commented on by Alexandrian scholars.

Many fragments of the lost dramas also remain. Those from the Phæthon are copious enough to have tempted many modern men, notably Goethe, to essay the restoration at least of the plot.

The personal relations of Euripides were apparently not happy. As to his married life, the scoffs of Aristophanes are the poorest of evidence, yet some foundation, at least in popular belief, they must have had. That his artistic jealousy affected his work at times appears clear. The popular juries may have erred grievously in the assignment of the dramatic prizes. The tales of Euripides's frequent journeys, and final withdrawal from Athens altogether, are sufficiently authenticated. Certainly the "Bacchantes," though somewhat lacking in ethical quality, would indicate that the court of a Thessalian tyrant could appreciate dramatic art, even if the home republic seemed to its sad-hearted poet not adequately grateful. No dramatist has been more variously judged by the aftertime: yet his niche also is assured forever. Indeed, "Euripides the human" is a great living force to-day.

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CHAPTER XXVI

OTHER TRAGIC AUTHORS

Ion of Chios, by his name, his career, and the glimpses we get of his character, illustrates the lighter, more volatile nature of the Eastern Ionian, at least in the fifth century, and the powerful attraction of Athens. In the metropolis his forty tragedies were probably all produced. He used also the purely lyrical dithyramb, which still flourished independent of the drama, and of which we probably now have several fine examples among Bacchylides's poems. The fragments of Ion's gossipy memoirs include a harmless sketch of Sophocles, on his military embassy to Chios, winning by a trick a kiss from the pretty cup-bearer at a social banquet, and modestly agreeing with Pericles's opinion, that the larger strategy of war was out of his field.

Two sons of Aischylos, as well as remoter kinsmen, also composed dramas. One of them, Euphorion, in particular, was placed first; Sophocles, second; Euripides, despite the power of his Medea, third, in 431 B.C. This decision, just at the close of the great Periclean epoch, gives us a curious hint as to the relative popularity of the three "schools" or family traditions. That there was some such continuity, possibly aided by collaboration in the father's lifetime and by legacies of unused dramas, seems clear. So in the "Frogs," just after Sophocles's death, Dionysos remarks that he will now soon see what Iophon can do alone. Another son, Ariston, is mentioned, while a grandson, the younger Sophocles, brought out the posthumous Oidipus Coloneus,

and is himself a fourth-century dramatist. Whether the younger Euripides was a son or nephew of the master is uncertain. All this helps us to realize how numerous were artists of almost any kind in this unique age, and, especially, that the dramatic poet was by no means a remote and inspired bard, but rather was regarded as a clever craftsman, glad to find a patron and a profitable market for his creations.

Tragedy proper seems to have clung, or to have been perforce restricted, to the old and now somewhat hackneyed myths. Perhaps the last who wrote a connected group of dramas on the Oidipus legend was Critias, a member of the Socratic circle, but much better known as the fiercest spirit among the "Thirty Tyrants," whose bloody and greedy rule capped the climax of Athenian miseries in 404 B.C. So Dionysios, the tyrant of Syracuse, was proudest of his tragedies, and once at least won the prize with them at Athens. This body of early imaginative myth, full of beautiful plastic suggestions, sufficiently remote for noble artistic use, yet ascribing to gods and heroes very human qualities and actions, had been for centuries the most evident and helpful source of supply for poetry and the other arts. But its highest usefulness was now exhausted.

Even in the fifth century the popular taste must often have rebelled against the austere entertainment offered them by the great artists and philosophic poets. The pious tradition of Aischylos must always have been somewhat irksome to many, even to most, in the merry Dionysiac season. Aristophanes appeals with confidence to the folk in his "Birds":

Vss. 785-89. "Naught is pleasanter or better than to grow a pair of wings.
Even now, if one of you spectators were with feathers fitted,

Then, when hungry and aweary of the tragic choruses,
Flitting out, and homeward faring, he would breakfast at his ease,
And again when fully sated would come flying back :—to *us.*"

Far more effective than the brief and semi-serious satyric afterpiece, Athenian comedy was the natural answer to a popular need. The great dramatists of the fourth century were no liegemen, even in name, of Melpomene. Somewhat difficult to classify in our ignorance is Agathon, perhaps more a musician than a dramatist, author of the romantic play "The Flower," which was purely original, without either mythical or historical basis.

CHAPTER XXVII

BEGINNINGS OF COMEDY

WE have seen that tragedy was in its beginnings an offshoot from the dithyramb, or cyclic choral song about Dionysos's altar. Aristotle traces the origin of comedy to the processional songs in the great Nature-god's honor, wherein emblems of the life-giving power were displayed and honored. These songs had for a long time no settled artistic form. Jest and raillery, largely directed at the spectators collectively or as individuals, seems to have been a very prominent and essential feature. The transfer of comedy from older Peloponnesian centres to Attica, and in fact, as of tragedy, to Icaria, early in the sixth century before Christ, is associated with the name of Susarion, from Megara: a lost poet, unless we accept five feeble lines culminating with:

Poetics, 4, 12.

"To wed or not to wed alike is woe."

The first important comic poet, however, Epicharmos, though a native of Cos, wrote his plays for Gelon and Hieron at Syracuse, and in broad Doric dialect. They appear to have been largely travesties on mythical scenes. Thus "Hebè's Wedding" gave full opportunity to exploit the notorious gluttony of the bridegroom, Heracles. The "Cyclops" was an equally happy subject, and "Prometheus" was utilized even by Aischylos on one occasion for a satyr-drama. "The Rustic," "The Spectators," "Mr. and Mrs. Speech," must have had a more up-to-date

character. Epicharmos was, moreover, a most shrewd and keen critic of life, as Horace testifies, while Plato makes him the unquestioned master of comedy, as was *Homer*, so the philosopher gravely assures us, of tragedy. Some bits of Epicharmos's sententious wisdom have floated to us, but nothing worthy of his high repute.

In Syracuse also, in the fifth century, appeared the mimes of Sophron and others. The farces in this peculiar form are divided by blundering old Suidas into "masculine"—as "Tunny-catchers," "Fishermen," "Old Men," "Messenger"— and "feminine," *e.g.*, "Sempstresses," "Mother-in-law," etc. Plato is accused of having even "slept on" these mimes, and of imitating them shamelessly in his own dialogues. Of these curious and meagre statements we can make little. Monologues, or simple dialogues, without chorus or any elaborate equipment, these mimes would seem to have been.

But at any rate we need expect no dignified limitations for comedy, whether it be "Comus-song" or "village-song." In Attica the comedies were not "given a chorus," and offered regularly in competition at the annual festival, until about 470 B.C. This may well have been part of a reaction against Aischylean seriousness at Carnival time.

We are limited in our knowledge almost absolutely to a single comic poet, of unrivalled creative power and originality. How much was traditional before his day we can hardly surmise: the more as novelty and startling surprises are the very soul of the comedian's art. Indeed, even our present scant knowledge of the earlier Athenian "wooers of coy Thalia" is largely drawn from a long reminiscential passage in Aristophanes's "Knights."

Magnes, the first poet there mentioned, wrote a "Birds," "Frogs," "Lydians," etc., full of strange cries, as Aristophanes remarks. He had lagged belated on the stage, but was now dead.



TEMPLE OF ZEUS AT OLYMPIA.

Modern Restoration. By Victor Laloux and Paul Monceaux.



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Of Kratinos's sweet song we hear that

Vss. 528-29. "It carried along plane-trees and oaks, and even his enemies, headlong :
And never a song at a feast was heard but 'Figwood-sandalled Doro.'"

The allusion is to a parody of the ancient hymn to "Golden-sandalled Hera." "Doro" is an imaginary goddess of bribery, and "figwood" is equivalent here to our *sycophancy*. A bold treatment of corrupt political conditions is plainly indicated. This poet is described as now a wandering babbling dotard, with broken lyre, withered garlands, and insatiate thirst, unpitied by the folk, though he should be entertained with free drink in the town-hall for his youthful exploits. It is pleasant to add that Kratinos astonished folk and rival once more before he died, by bringing out the next year a comedy, called frankly the "Flask," which carried off the first prize over the famous Aristophanic "Clouds." His description of Pericles as the "onion-headed Zeus, son of Kronos and Discord," indicates a fearless political lampooner of conservative affiliations. A characteristic distich of his is :

"Verily wine is a fleet-foot steed to the genial minstrel :
Whoso water doth quaff nothing begetteth aright."

Eupolis was probably the chief of Aristophanes's rivals, but perished, still young, in the Peloponnesian war. His "Flatterers" described somewhat such a scene in the house of Callias, prodigal son of the wealthy citizen Hipponicos, as Plato sketches early in his Protagoras. The comic poet, Phrynichos, was cited above for a kindly verse on Sophocles's death. The comic Plato, not the philosopher, was one of the many maligners of Sappho. But it is useless to catalogue mere names.

A single citation may exemplify how small is our salvage

from ancient literature, compared with what is lost. Hermippos "the one-eyed" is decidedly a minor figure in fifth-century comedy. Yet this fragment of his, beginning with a Homeric verse, throws a valuable cross-light on Attic trade and politics alike, while it shows us that bold references to matters of statecraft were nowise confined to the audacious Aristophanes.

"Tell me, ye Muses, now, who hold your Olympian dwellings,
What are the goods men bring in black ships hither to harbor?
Out of Kyrene the cauliflower comes, and hides of the oxen,
Out of Italia ribs of beef and grain in abundance.
Syracuse sends us cheese, and pork she furnishes also.
—As to the Corcyræans, we pray that Poseidon destroy them
Utterly, vessels and all, for the treacherous heart that is in them!
Rhodes provides us raisins, and figs that invite unto slumber.
Slaves from Phrygia come,—but out of Arcadia, allies.
Carthage, finally, sends us carpets, and cushions replendent."

From one such play, complete and duly dated, what manifold light on the real life of the day might be thrown!

CHAPTER XXVIII

ARISTOPHANES

If originality, imaginative force, be the chief test, Aristophanes must take rank among the first six or eight poets of all time. Of writers in dramatic form, only the creator of Falstaff and Bottom the Weaver rivals him in comic power. Yet he is not, and never can be, a really acceptable and popular author in our modern world. Whether read in Greek or English, he is often difficult, occasionally unintelligible. We must first be familiar with numberless events, persons, customs, to which he alludes, and then catch as we may the point of the swift, merciless, glancing jest with which he passes them by. Often, of course, this is no longer possible.

But furthermore, no sane, clean-minded student can consent to interpret or discuss frankly the real Aristophanes. Not to mention his covert allusions, his very words are in many cases too foul for explanation. Every translator paraphrases, tones down, omits what he cannot treat more honestly. There remains still much that is indispensable, even to a summary sketch of Greek literary genius and its utterances. Even his rhythms are as resistless in their sweep as Swinburne's. The Attic speech seems all aquiver with such life as pulses in Shelley's choral and lyric songs. Indeed, if it were possible to cull out, and piece together intelligibly, the nobler portions of Aristophanes's work, his "Birds" and "Frogs," at least, would stand high among the most beautiful masterpieces of Hellenic idealism. But no such feat is practicable. Some hints of his real quality we must attempt to convey.

His year of birth or death, in general the circumstances of his life, are unknown. His claim to rank as a conservative, in politics and religion, never caused him to hold his hand when any mortal or divinity gave him an opening for a scoff or biting jest. For forty years he was the favorite of the theatre. Old age, or a change of political conditions, softened the ferocity of his wit, as the poverty of Athens in the early fourth century stripped his plays of the chorus, and of material splendor generally. So his last dramas belong to the New Comedy, or at least to the transitional Middle Comedy, with its milder satirical pictures of rather ignoble social conditions. But the true Aristophanes is the audacious, strong-winged, creative poet of a larger day. The eleven comedies which survive give us an entirely adequate measure of his unique genius. The later ancients knew forty. The number is smaller than with the tragedians, because only one comic play was offered by each poet in the annual competition.

Comedy was equipped, like tragedy, with three actors, and a chorus of twenty-four members. The latter, as a rule, came forward, at least once in the play, for a long address to the audience, in their proper person or in the poet's behalf. This *Parabasis*, or Digression, as it is called, of the "Knights" has already been cited for allusions to Magnes and Kratinos.

Aristophanes's first dramas appeared in the time of Cleon, who is depicted by Thukydides also as a blatant and corrupt demagogue, the most unworthy successor of Pericles in the popular regard. The "Feasters" (427 B.C.) and "Babylonians" (426 B.C.) are lost. Cleon had cause to complain of the latter, but his suit against the poet appears to have failed. In the "Acharnians" hatred of Cleon and weariness of the war reveal from the first words the political trend of the piece. They remain the chief topics to the end. Cleon on the

Acharnians, 425 B.C.

previous occasion had felt doubly outraged, since his statesmanship had been attacked in the presence of allies and strangers: evidently at the great Dionysia. This time, says one of the characters, he cannot complain,

Vss. 504-5. "For we're at the Lenaion, by ourselves:
There are no aliens here."

The main character is a sturdy old countryman, Dikaiarchos, who makes a private treaty with the Spartans. His luxurious ease is ludicrously contrasted with other men's hardships. There are many realistic details, and a certain homely beauty, in the rustic scenes. Even the Dionysiac procession and song is performed by the old countryman and his family.

The boastful general, Lamachos, comes in for much ridicule. Euripides appears in one scene, to be satirized chiefly for the various ragged suits which he keeps for his pathetic characters. Many of his lines seem to be *parodied:* an early and unfriendly testimony to his popularity. The spectators are repeatedly harangued directly, on the folly and misery of the war. There is little pretence of any sustained dramatic unity or illusion.

Knights, 424 B.C. The general purport of the "Knights" is much the same. The Athenian populace is audaciously personified as a dull-witted old man, Demos—reminding us of John Bull—who is villanously cheated by his Paphlagonian slave. The latter is Cleon, as his mask and make-up instantly reveal when he appears. This character Aristophanes himself assumed, as no actor dared perform it. The duties of the chorus were actually assumed by some of the first gentlemen of the city. The poet seems to have been welcomed as a serious political force on the conservative side, reminding us of young Jonathan Swift in the age of Queen Anne. Of course the dramatic illusion is constantly broken, as treaties, legisla-

tive measures, etc., are fully discussed. The Paphlagonian is finally ousted by a cleverer, more loquacious rogue than himself. There is far more unity and effectiveness in this piece, but the bitter cynicism and constant vulgarity make it less agreeable than the Acharnians. Rustic coarseness seems cleaner than urban corruption.

Clouds, 423 B.C.

"The Clouds" was first performed in 423 B.C., and, after the unexpected defeat of the poet on that occasion by Kratinos, was remodelled. Here the satire is aimed at the so-called Sophists, especially at the new art of rhetoric, which was popularly regarded as a dishonest device to make the worse cause appear the better. With outrageous injustice, Socrates, who pretended to no knowledge, took no fees, and devoted his life to ethical discussion alone, is elevated to the position of chief Sophist. To this play he alludes unmistakably in the Platonic Apology, as an important cause of his unpopularity.

Apology, 19 C.

An old rustic, Strepsiades, married above his rank, is worried by his son's sporting debts. Having vainly begged the quicker-witted youth to go and learn of

Vs. 103.

"The quacks, the palefaced folk, the barefoot ones,"

he goes himself and knocks at the door of the little Thinking-shop (Phrontisterion). Some of the sages are delving in earth: others measuring the jump of a flea. Socrates, high aloft in a basket, explains solemnly:

Vs. 225.

"I walk on air, and overlook the sun."

Descending, he proceeds to initiate the old man.

The Clouds, whom Socrates causes to follow him earthward, appear as beautiful white-robed women, forming the chorus of the comedy. Intermingled though it is with the vulgar comments of old Strepsiades, their en-

trance-song is the purest burst of nature-poetry in the language. No version can do it more than justice.

Vss. 275 - 85, Translation of Andrew Lang.

"Immortal clouds, from the echoing shore
Of the father of streams, from the sounding sea,
Dewy and fleet, let us rise and soar;
Dewy and gleaming and fleet are we!
Let us look on the tree-clad mountain-crest,
On the sacred earth where the fruits rejoice,
On the waters that murmur east and west,
On the tumbling sea with his moaning voice,
For unwearied glitters the Eye of the Air, . . .

Vss. 299-305.

"Let us on, ye maidens that bring the Rain,
Let us gaze on Pallas' citadel,
In the country of Cecrops fair and dear,
The mystic land of the holy cell,
Where the rites unspoken securely dwell,
And the gifts of the gods that know not stain,
And a people of mortals that know not fear. . . ."

To such music, to such heights of song, this wondrous being could attain at a bound, at any instant: only to return as suddenly to foul jest or biting satirical gibe. The explanation is so simple, yet so difficult for us to hold, that it will bear reiteration. The inspired poet, and his no less sensitive and imaginative hearers, have given themselves over to the mad intoxication of the Bacchic revels. They are too nakedly unconventional, too close to the throbbing heart of nature herself, to be conscious of shame. It was a festival of men alone. Even this song was actually rendered by a chorus, not of maidens, but of youths. It was all acceptable to the god: we can only echo,—a strange god! Such revels, quite as innocent of real immorality, might occur in some luxurious Bohemian club of artists to-day: but not with the slightest religious pretence.

In a few minutes Socrates is expounding to his pupils that Zeus and the other gods no longer exist: Vortex is lord of all. This is an evident parody of some materialistic philosophy, probably Anaxagoras's. Rhythms, gender, and other distinctions of formal grammar are presently discussed, and were, in fact, novelties of the time.

But Strepsiades is finally dismissed as a hopeless dunce. His son reluctantly takes his place, and easily learns the art of cheating his creditors. Yet when the youth applies the same lessons to outwitting and finally beating his father, the latter mounts the roof of the Phrontisterion with torch and axe in hand. To Socrates's frantic inquiries he makes the mocking answer:

"I walk on air, and overlook the sun."

The burning of the atheistic Thinking-shop makes a spectacular finale.

One natural question may at once arise: What effect had all this on the strange heroic sage, familiar to every man in the theatre, who was thus ludicrously maligned? He appears to have appreciated the humorous fitness of his features, figure, and way of life for such dramatic use. One tradition says he obligingly stood up to be compared with his double. The question of his personal relations with the poet will come up again. That he seriously believed such influences aided materially to bring about his martyrdom at last can hardly be questioned.

Infra, p. 323.

The "Wasps" is a play interesting to a much smaller circle. It satirizes, above all, the Athenian passion for litigation. A dog is tried for stealing a piece of cheese, and accidentally acquitted. There is still plenty of political allusion. Indeed, it is old "Cleon-lover" who is finally cured of his fondness for lawsuits by his son, "Cleon-hater."

Wasps, 422 B.C.

The "Peace" indicates its subject in the title. The countryman Trygaios flies up to Heaven on a huge beetle in quest of Peace. But the very gods have departed, leaving War enthroned on Olympos. Peace is confined in a dungeon. Thence she is extricated, with Harvest and Festival. The wedding of Trygaios ends the play.

Peace, 421 B.C.

The purpose of this piece is evident. It has a clear, unified plot, and abounds in beautiful poetry. It could be effectively given on our own stage, in a very free and incomplete version. How the action and changes of scene were devised in Athens we can hardly imagine. Trygaios himself has grave misgivings on his upward flight, and cries out to the machinist of the theatre to handle him carefully.

The creative imagination, the sense of beauty, is now wide awake in our poet, though mixt always with very diverse impulses. That the "Birds" won only second place may well fill us with amazement at Attic genius, or with deepest distrust for popular juries sitting on the merits of art. Unless we regard the large outlines of Dante's world as his proper invention, it is not easy to find a more vivid and magnificent creation of the human fancy. The birds construct, with all the rites of founders, a middle city between Heaven and Earth, under the grotesque title of Cloudcuckooville (Nephelococcygia). The gods and mankind, thus cut off from each other, are quickly brought to terms by the birds.

Birds, 414 B.C.

The choral songs, in particular, of this play are not only of wonderful beauty, but show a surprising familiarity with the notes and habits of many birds. The comedy might well have been created for its own sake. Yet Blarney the Athenian, who with his comrade Hopeful is the prime mover in the enterprise, seems like a character sketch, and the two may have worn unmistakable masks. We know

from Thukydides what magnificent hopes were excited just at that time by the Sicilian expedition. The wedding of Peisthetairos (Blarney) with Zeus's daughter Basileia (Empire) made the usual spectacular close. The actual events of the next year or two were so tragic, so disastrous to Athens, that we can hardly expect even from the Comic Muse any later flight so exuberantly joyful as this. It is the masterpiece of Aristophanic—perhaps of Hellenic—imagination.

The attention of Aristophanes seems at one period especially directed to what we call "women's rights." The Lysistrata has a motive not unknown in more modern comedy. The women of Greece, in convention assembled, resolve to force their husbands, by temporary divorce, to bring about a general peace. The success of the strategy is complete, but the scenes are of a character quite indescribable.

In the "Thesmophoriazousai" the Attic women are celebrating, as the title reveals, the exclusively feminine festival of Demeter. They propose to take measures of vengeance on the arch woman-hater Euripides. He, informed of his danger, vainly endeavors to persuade his dainty and effeminate brother poet Agathon to attend the meeting in disguise. Euripides's brother-in-law does so, is detected, and finally rescued with great difficulty.

Both dramatists are mercilessly ridiculed in this drama. Euripides's extant works are his sufficient defence: but Agathon is less fortunate. Indeed, after-time must form its impressions of him chiefly from these scenes. Possibly the play embittered his stay in Athens. We may even imagine something like regret on the comedian's side. A cordial allusion to Agathon comes early in the "Frogs." He and his tormentor will be seen together in Plato's "Symposion."

Infra, p. 251.



THESEUS AND AMPHITRITE.
Greek Vase by Euphronios, in the Louvre.



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We may mention briefly here also the "Ecclesiazousai," or Women's Town-meeting, brought out twenty years later. The poet's daring imagination is sadly tamed. The political gibes and criticisms are mild indeed by comparison. The coarseness, the low opinion of womankind, even the wit and sparkle of dialogue, still remind us of the earlier triumphs. The radical communistic ideas of the women politicians have been interpreted by some critics as a satire on certain features in Plato's ideal Republic. But the poet of the "Clouds," even in later life, would hardly have refrained so carefully from personal allusion to the philosopher. Moreover, it is very doubtful if even the two oldest books, of the ten in Plato's completed work, had been published so early.

The most important and instructive in many ways of all Aristophanes's comedies, as a real criticism of contemporary life and art, is the "Frogs." It is, also, the most difficult to reconcile with any religious or reverent attitude in the poet. Dionysos is himself the central figure of the comedy, and to the cowardice which he displays even in Homer he adds many other failings quite as ungodlike.

Iliad, vi., 132–37.

The tragic poets Sophocles and Euripides have both died within the year. Dionysos inquires of his brother Heracles the road to Hades, that he may fetch a good tragedian, preferably Euripides, back to life. Sophocles, he thinks, would hardly run away,

Vss. 82–85. "For he was gentle here, is gentle there."

Heracles: Where's Agathon?
Dionysos: Where is he? Gone and left me:
—A good poet, and regretted by his friends.
Heracles: Where is he gone?
Dionysos: To the luxury of the blest.

Agathon had really departed, not to Elysium, but to the luxurious court of a Thessalian tyrant. The remark on Iophon was quoted before.

Supra, p. 236.

By Charon Dionysos is compelled to row himself across. The Stygian frogs meantime console him with their famous song "Brekekéx koáx."

The god's faithful attendant Xanthias, heavily laden, attends him. When a goblin, real or imagined, approaches, Dionysos pushes his slave to the point of danger, and finally, in a panic, rushes toward the orchestra and begs protection from his own priest, who was sitting, as the chief guest of honor, in the beautiful carven chair still to be seen in the oft-remodelled Athenian theatre.

Presently appears a band of the Initiated, chanting the praise of the god, under his mystical name at Eleusis, Iacchos. This is the true chorus of the play. Their songs, of unearthly sweetness, seem at least close akin to those actually sung in the Eleusinian mysteries. Demeter is invoked, to bless both mirthful and serious utterances. Yet it is amid most impure and unseemly jests, and libels on noted Athenians named, that we hear such strains as:

Vss. 448 - 59. Translation of J. H. Frere.

"Let us hasten, let us fly,
Where the lovely meadows lie;
Where the living waters flow;
Where the roses bloom and blow.
Heirs of immortality,
Segregated, safe and pure,
Easy, sorrowless, secure;
Since our earthly course is run,
We behold a brighter sun.
Holy lives,—a holy vow,—
Such rewards await them now."

Dionysos is now at Pluto's gate. He has come with club and lion-skin to secure good entertainment, but on announcing himself as Heracles he is promised dire ven-

geance for his theft of the watch-dog Kerberos on his former visit. While the angry doorkeeper is summoning Pluto, Xanthias is persuaded to take his master's place. Both are well beaten, but finally admitted.

Pluto welcomes Dionysos, who finds already in progress a fierce contest among the poets. Sophocles at his death had refused to dispute Aischylos's superiority, but Euripides promptly raised a schism and claimed the honor. So Dionysos is installed as umpire, with the return to earth in prospect as the reward for the winner.

Thus a critical analysis of poetic merits and faults is actually conducted, of course with much unfairness and some nonsense, yet with a strong vein of serious and sound method. The passage extends to more than six hundred lines. Some of the rival recitations are clearly atrocious parodies, some are noted by the ancient scholiasts as genuine, and in some cases give us knowledge of lost plays. One such couplet, from the "Eleusinians," was cited on a previous page.

Supra, p. 183.

The most famous episode in this scene is that in which the long, frigid explanations in Euripides's prologues are ridiculed. Here there is no distortion of facts at all. Aischylos declares he can "hitch a flask of oil" upon almost any of them. Euripides recites, with interruptions, a series of his own prologues:

Vss. 1206-8.

Eur. "Aigyptos, so the accepted story runs,
With fifty daughters voyaging the sea
To Argos came and—
Aisch. lost his flask of oil!"

The more general prologue fares no better.

Vss. 1217-19.

Eur. "No mortal is there who is wholly blest.
The gentle-born has not the means to live,
The ignoble clown hath—
Aisch. lost his flask of oil!"

Each attempt wrecks on the same rock: and we also realize that three or four such living play-bills in one day's performance may well have been wearisome. The type is fairly enough given:

Vss. 1225-26. "Cadmos departing from the town of Tyre,
Son of Agenor——"

Vss. 1231-32. "Pelops the Tantalid to Pisa came
With his swift steeds and——"

Indeed, this especial cæsura at the fifth syllable was ever after known as the Euripidean.

Aischylos by no means escaped unscathed, though in general he represents the good old conservatism in art, style, and morals against the dangerous and popular decadent — as Euripides really appeared, no doubt, to the sober, austere, moderate Aristophanic fancy! Especially when, as a final test, the two tragic poets' words are actually weighed in a huge pair of balances, Aischylos's pompous, even bombastic, grandiloquence is quite as mirth-provoking as the twitterings of his rival.

Yet at last Dionysos, who had come originally for Euripides, makes a final gibing use of a perfectly justifiable line in the "Hippolytos,"

"My tongue has sworn, unsworn my mind remains,"

—and changes his mind. The procession which as usual closes the play escorts Aischylos back to earth, while Sophocles, we hear, will probably maintain over Euripides his claim to the throne of the poets in Hades. This final grouping of the three will at least assure us once again that our wealth in the best dramatic poetry, surviving, outweighs our losses. With this most original and wonderful of comedies the fifth century, or rather our knowledge of it, fitly closes.

The comparatively feeble and late "Women's Town-

meeting" was mentioned above. The last scene of all in our merry poet's career is the "Plutos," itself a recasting of a play twenty years older. But not even Kratinos's old age was more pitiful. Chorus there is none, if we except a ragged crowd introduced in a single scene of seventy lines, with possibly one brief chant. As for political criticism, there is a single timid allusion. The god of Wealth is healed of his blindness, and repairs the grievous injustice of mortal lots. Yet when he is actually installed in Pallas Athene's Parthenon, as the chief divinity, we may well doubt if the old poet is really more optimistic, or more reverent, than in his prime. Despite this bit of the old audacity in imagination, the play is a more or less realistic social drama, and so is fitly counted as an early example of the New Comedy of manners. The veteran lags belated on the stage of a new century.

Plutos, 388 B.C.

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For a franker discussion of Aristophanic comedy see Symonds's "Greek Poets," or Collins's "Aristophanes" in "Ancient Classics."

The best translations are those of J. H. Frere, which are remarkable triumphs of ingenuity in rhymed verse. They are, of course, free, and are also much expurgated. The "Acharnians," "Knights" and "Birds" are included in Morley's Library (Routledge). The "Frogs" and part of the "Peace," are published only in the expensive edition of Frere's works (London, 1874, Vol. III.). Professor Kennedy also has a translation of the "Birds" (Macmillan). F. Mitchell has rendered the "Acharnians," "Knights," "Clouds," "Wasps" (London, 1820), and J. B. Rogers the "Peace," "Wasps," "Lysistrata" (London 1867–78). An elaborate edition of all the plays, by Rogers, including text, metrical translation, and notes, is also to be published by Macmillan.

CHAPTER XXIX

LATER COMEDY

AGAIN, as with tragedy, our knowledge ends abruptly. We have no fragments, even, of any comedy after Aristophanes, sufficient to give a tolerable notion of the plot. Indeed, the great mass of extracts contained in Stobaios's scrap-book, or quoted by other grave writers citing for our edification, might give the impression that this was a school of sententious philosophy. How misleading any such notion is we may judge from Latin versions like Plautus's "Trinummus" and Terence's "Andria," both frankly borrowed from the Greek masters, Philemon and Menander. The few scenes recovered in 1897 from Menander's "Farmer" give quite the same impression. The wise saws are there, in abundance: but they only emphasize the pettiness of the social conditions and ambitions in a witty, cultivated, degenerate age. We can but hope that the contemporary stage was not, after all, a just picture of fourth or third century Athens and Hellas. Yet it was an enthusiastic and a scholarly admirer, surrounded by the boundless treasures of the Alexandrian library, who cried: "O Menander and Life, which of you imitated the other?"

Menander, 342-291 B.C.

Aristophanes on Menander.

It was to Euripides that these men looked back as their true master, though they wrote, far more than he, in an age which had outlived enthusiasm and forgotten the earlier ideals. Such character sketches as his querulous Electra and her deferential base-born husband, or the fussy loquacious nurse in the "Hippolytos," certainly did foreshadow a drama to which neither chanting chorus nor

tragic mask and buskin were befitting. The stock types, however, of the later comedy, the monotonously similar rascally slaves, youthful libertines, credulous fathers, hungry parasites, complaisant slave-girls, etc., appear to be rather due to the Sicilian art of Epicharmos's school.

That the *eight hundred* plays of the Middle Comedy which Athenaios read, and occasionally cites for the name of a rare bird or dainty sauce, would provide for us more useful information on myriad details of ancient life, is certain. Yet we have here no such bitter sense of loss as in the disappearance of the early Greek lyric. After all, this school stands, in the tale of Hellenism, somewhat as Congreve and Van Brugh, or possibly Goldsmith and Sheridan, in the literature of Shakespeare's people and land.

It is interesting to find in one of these so-called comic authors, Timocles, a fine definition of the function of tragedy :

> " Man is a creature doomed to weary toil,
> And many sorrows life itself contains.
> As consolation in our anxious moods
> Was this devised. The soul forgets her woes,
> Led to oblivion by an alien grief.
> With pleasure, and made wiser, she departs :
> For each who sees a trouble, heavier far
> Than he has suffered, fall on other men,
> Lamenteth less his own calamity."

Yet this spirit finds in life, after all, little save cause for Stoical endurance. The Epicurean ideal of happiness offered by Philemon is little nobler.

Philemon, 361-263 B.C.

> " It is Peace ! O dearest Zeus,
> How loving is the goddess, and how kind !
> Marriages, festivals, kin, children, friends,
> Food, wine, health, wealth, prosperity she gives.
> —And if of all these things we are bereft,
> Dead is the life of men while yet they live."

In such an age we may expect the morbid consciousness of colorless monotony in life to appear: and there seems to be a mournful sincerity in the words cited from Menander, the greatest of the school:

> "That man I count most happy, Parmeno,
> Who, after he has viewed the splendors here,
> Departeth quickly whither he hath come.
> This common sun, I mean, stars, waters, clouds,
> And fire: these shall he see if he abide
> A century, or if his years be few;
> Nor aught more glorious shall he see than they."

Of course any such passage may be merely spoken in character, as it might have been by the melancholy Jacques in the forest of Arden, where all else is so full of youthful life and joy. But the same tone is struck in so many fragments that it is clearly a favorite commonplace. We are painfully reminded, that these "idle singers of an empty day" have outlived all hope of the ancient Hellenic freedom. Menander is the congenial friend of Epicuros. And still, console ourselves as we may for utter loss, we must hope that at least one complete play of Philemon or Menander may yet be restored to us, if only to test the truth of Roman Gellius's frank essay, on the superiority of their polished originals to the coarsened, vulgarized Latin paraphrases.

Noct. Att., II., 23.

It is, however, more than time to turn back to a happier century, and to study the rise of that younger, calmer form of rhythmical and artistic utterance, born and bred under the influences of true poetry, which we call prose.

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The fragments of the dramatists can be studied to advantage only in the original. A somewhat fuller treatment will be found in the author's essay on "Philemon, Menander, etc.," in the Warner Library. The late Professor Paley published a small volume of spirited translations, in rhymed verse, "Fragments of the Greek Comic Poets" (Macmillan).



BOOK IV

CLASSIC PROSE





CHAPTER XXX

BEGINNINGS OF PROSE

THAT poetry is older than prose is a commonplace, and, like most such dicta, it needs explanation. The gibberish of savages, the chatter of the street or the market, is neither prose nor poetry. Both rubrics together cover only the artistic forms of utterance.

Poetry, we believe, arose in closest connection with rhythmic bodily movement, and usually, also, with some rudimentary attempt at music. Intense passionate feeling, a simple, well-marked recurrent rhythm, and the various forms of emphatic repetition or "rime" in sounds, are its usual marks. Such crude chants, making united action possible, are the first utterances to be retained in anything like fixt form: and permanency is an essential quality of literature. Our children begin their acquaintance with poetry by intoning the jingling lines of Mother Goose as they dance or march in what we call *play*. They are repeating the longer experiences of a savage ancestry. Large masses of poetry, even extended epics, can be, and have been, transmitted from age to age without the use of writing: even as our children's games and songs come down, unwritten, for centuries.

But with increasing maturity comes a cooler attitude of mind toward the present and the past. The historic spirit, the desire to know and record the events of the passing day, is aroused. Any too regular rhythm now becomes a fetter, being no longer natural or desirable. Certain cadences and measures must indeed still remain, for they are rooted in physical necessity.

The line between poetry and prose is perhaps crossed in

apophthegms, proverbs, nuggets of sententious wisdom, of condensed experience. These still often use end-rime, as "Haste makes waste"; or alliteration, as "Time and tide," "Live and learn." Pittacos's maxim, cited on a previous page, looks like plain prose. So do "Know thyself" and "Naught in excess," most famous of Delphic warnings. Thales, Bias, even Solon, and the other sages, seem to have been decidedly prosaic in their proverbial wisdom. More poetic are such truer philosophers as Heracleitos, while some, as we have seen, actually used hexameter and other verse-forms.

Supra, p. 111.

Supra, pp. 73-75.

Perhaps Heracleitos was the first master of prose. His style was famous for its obscurity, and the brief aphorisms preserved for us are usually weighted heavily with thought, *e.g.*:

"The King whose oracle is at Delphi neither reveals nor conceals, but indicates.

"All things are exchanged for fire, and fire for all things; even as all goods are bartered for gold, and gold for all goods.

"Listening, not to me, but to the Word, it is wise for men to confess that all things are one.

"The Sun shall not transgress his bounds; else the Fates, the handmaids of Justice, will find it out.

"You cannot step twice into the same river; for other and ever other waters flow on.

"Dogs bark at everyone they do not know. Fools are frightened at every novel idea.

"Manifold learning maketh not the spirit wise."

No wonder that he who first strove to shape such nuggets of philosophic thought, in an untechnical language, into a form fit for common use, refused to be further hampered by metre, or music, which did not appeal to his own rather gloomy imagination.

Larger masses of calmer, more colloquial utterance

would be produced, perhaps, first in early oratory. But little, save here and there a picturesque phrase, is likely to be saved until some form of written record has become easy and usual. Indeed, even Pericles's and Gorgias's genuine speeches have almost wholly perished. The art of writing, borrowed from eastward neighbors, was in use among the Greeks for centuries before any large prose composition was created and preserved.

Mere lists of kings, magistrates, priests, or victors in contests, copies of royal decrees or civic laws, even international treaties, are not yet literature. The law-codes of Draco and Solon had, of course, little or no artistic intention. But under the influence of the old epics and the myths, a larger form of chronicle, an attempt to trace, from the divine ancestor down, the past of a city, a clan, or a kingly line, presently suggested itself. Such chronicles were the forerunners of Herodotos's masterpiece. Rapid progress became possible after King Psammetichos, late in the seventh century, opened Egypt to foreign commerce, and instead of the costly parchment the Greeks could use the relatively cheap and easily prepared papyrus. Here, as so often before, the colonies of Asiatic Ionia were far in advance of continental Hellas. Indeed, the Ionic dialect, and later its special Attic form, dominated this field of literature almost exclusively.

Since Cadmos of Miletos is at best but a name, his townsman, Hecataios, appears to us as the first important author of a Chronicle. He himself makes a creditable figure in Herodotos's account, striving to dissuade the too-confident Ionians from their fatal rebellion against Persia, and later interceding to save them from its worst results. Of his "Genealogies," in at least four books, we have meagre fragments: from the "Description of the Earth," in two rolls, there are more copious extracts extant.

Herod., v., 36, 125.

The best-known author of this type, however, was Hellanicos, whose life, like Sophocles's, apparently covered almost the entire fifth century. His energetic researches in chronology resulted in works like "The Priestesses at Argos" (*i.e.*, of the great Hera-temple) and the "Carneian Victors" (in the local games of Sparta). These were much more than bare lists. Indeed, we are told that they were partially composed in verse. This may refer to the citation of metrical inscriptions. Many other collections of local legends, essays on the Trojan and Persian wars, etc., are credited to this energetic investigator. With all his pains, he wins from Thukydides only blame for his vagueness as to dates. He seems to have had a monotonous, naïve style. Though a Mitylenean, he, too, used the Ionic dialect. He and Herodotos appear to have been quite independent of each other.

Thukyd., I., 97.

We get a strong impression that these two authors, Hecataios and Hellanicos, and their whole class, the "Logographers," were altogether inferior in interest and scope to the man of genius with whose delightful volume our connected knowledge of Greek or European history begins.

Indeed, the early and splendid bloom of Asiatic Hellenism is already passed. When Darius crushed the rash rebellion of the Ionian coast cities and destroyed Miletos, in 494, it marks the close of an epoch. Those cities were presently freed by Athens, but only to become her abject tributaries, and to pass again, within the century, into Persian hands. Herodotos, the last Eastern Greek of supreme genius, though he still writes in the Asiatic dialect of Ionia, finds his most congenial friends in Athens, and a place of repose for his old age in an Attic colony on Italian soil.

CHAPTER XXXI

HERODOTOS

HERODOTOS was born a Persian subject, in the Dorian colony of Halicarnassos, in southwestern Asia Minor, so his Ionic dialect was probably learned from his more northern neighbors, though it seems a perfectly natural utterance. His direct suzerain was the Queen Artemisia of Caria, whose unscrupulous audacity during the battle in the straits of Salamis he describes, not without a certain pride in her successful craft and cruelty. The future historian, with all his Hellenic patriotism, was evidently bred to a high appreciation of Persian character also. His uncle, Panyasis, was a belated epic poet; a collector of myth and folk-lore. Early in the boy's life came the liberation of the Asiatic Greeks by the Athenian fleet. This taught him a lesson of gratitude which he never forgot. His wide journeyings must have begun early in life. Whether they were made for trade, love of learning, or mere adventure, we are not told. The Black Sea, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kyrene, all the chief points of the Greek peninsula, he visited. Some sort of safe-conduct from Persian officials he must have had.

485 (?)–425 (?) B.C.

viii., 87–88.

The occurrence of his public reading in Athens, which was most liberally rewarded by a gift of ten talents, is assigned to the year 445. The reward was well-earned, if the one hundred and thirty-ninth chapter of Book VII., alone, had been composed so early: yet the amount is so large that he seems rather to have rendered some great

political service. Perhaps the history was even then appreciated as a manual of information on the whole world of commerce and of politics. The numerous tales of his popular recitations in this or that city may be true in the main. Professional story-telling is familiar in the East, and he was certainly a master of the art. Even his journeys may have been made, in part, expressly to collect materials for such entertainment.

In 443 he became a citizen of the Attic colony Thurioi in Southern Italy. Athens itself had naturally many attractions for him, and he speaks familiarly of, *e.g.*, the Propylaia, which were not completed until 432 B.C. Yet he was often called a Thurian, and probably spent there a peaceful old age, dying before his beloved Athens's humiliation. Certainly his book seems like the leisurely and loving work of a wise, happy, reverent old man.

Herodotos took a large view of historical events, but colored them all with his own vivid imagination. His acceptance of the naïve, popular faith in marvel, miracle, prophecy, and direct intervention of the gods usually seems sincere. In many such respects he appears to belong rather to the Orient, or to the epoch of the Odyssey, than to the enlightened, sceptical, Periclean age. We must remember, however, that the friend of Sophocles cannot have been ignorant of artistic theory, of composition as a fine art: and even the shrewd scepticism of a true Periclean Greek sometimes peeps out behind his most marvellous recitals. He is extremely well read in the epic and lyric poetry, and has remarkably good judgment in purely literary questions.

The influence of Homer upon Herodotos was, of course, great: but the effect of Attic tragedy can be at least as clearly traced. Indeed, the very beginning of his work is dramatic. The Persian wars, his proper subject, are regarded as a final act in a long series of aggressions between

Greeks and Asiatic peoples now absorbed into Xerxes's empire. Europa, Io, Medea, and Helen pass across the scene.

However, we soon reach Crœsus of Lydia, who by conquering the Asiatic Greeks forged the first real link in the long chain of events. With this famous type of Oriental luxury, and fatuous confidence, Solon, the Athenian sage, is finely contrasted. Yet the latter's actual travels must have been over, long before Crœsus's accession, and the whole tale is a poetic invention. The further account of Crœsus's son and the prophecy how he should perish, is still more tragic and dramatic in quality, and mythical in most of its details. The exiled Phrygian prince Adrastos who comes to Crœsus, a fugitive, to be purified of involuntary blood-guiltiness, is a good copy of the Homeric Phoinix. The merciless coming of doom to Crœsus's son, from the very hand most eager to protect him, is no more historical in quality than the tale of Meleager, or of Oidipus. Indeed, the "steel point" by which his death must occur reminds us of the German fairy-tale "Dornröschen."

With the account of Crœsus's conqueror, the great Cyrus of Persia, we are carried much farther toward the marvel-loving Orient. Furthermore, we are frankly told that three other quite different chronicles of the same career were at the narrator's disposal. We would gladly have heard them all.

Still the scene widens. Wherever the plot, or the activities of the future combatants, Persia and Hellas, may carry us, native manners and customs, picturesque legend, anecdotes enlivened with graphic and witty conversations, which if held at all could never have been truly reported, are easily, often gracefully, woven into the main tale. Naturally enough, though the writer himself has a clean imagination and taste, some episodes overstep our modern notions of reticence almost as far as Scheherazade's unpruned narration. The main purpose is never lost from

sight, even when the account of the conquest of Egypt, by Cyrus's son Cambyses, brings with it the long and most inaccurate disquisition upon that land of marvels which more than fills Book II. This is indeed the most vulnerable section of the varied chronicle, partly because the deciphering of the hieroglyphs now gives to our scholars copious original documents, very little from which was translated in good faith to the inquisitive, credulous traveller in the fifth century before Christ.

From the time when Xerxes's heralds summon forth the ban and arrière-ban of every Asiatic people for the greatest invasion in all history, the unity of the tale is more strongly felt, and the style rises to fit its lofty theme. Yet even in these annals of his own childish years, these chronicles whose details were gathered from the lips of countless eyewitnesses, we have no sober account of merely actual events. Oracles are still uttered, and fulfilled. Pan hails Pheidippides in the Arcadian glade. Unearthly sights and sounds accompany the doomed host, whose wiser heads have long foreseen the very graves that await them in Platæan soil. We have in fact, as Dr. Wheeler has so well said, though not at all what we do or ever could write as history, something "better than that, for it is a picture of what history was to people then." Indeed, a half-century had sufficed to give these really marvellous events a semi-mythical coloring and charm. Since the grave, pragmatical Thukydides is practically of the same generation, we must suppose that it was Herodotos's birthplace, or his peculiar temperament, that made him rather a late disciple of the epic school, like his uncle, than a congenial member of Pericles's enlightened agnostic circle. For that we are profoundly thankful.

Herod., vi., 105.

There is perhaps no single profane volume so full of instruction and enjoyment for all who are interested in the remote past, or in human experience. No English words

of our present usage can imitate the quaint, untechnical naïveté of Herodotos, the simple, flowing sentences, often faulty but never obscure, the easy, effortless charm of his anecdotes. Nothing characteristic or typical seems to him trivial. "I shall go forward in my account, describing alike the small and great cities of men. For those which anciently were great, have most of them become little, and those which in my time were great, had before been small. Knowing, then, that human prosperity never abides at the same point, I shall discuss both alike."

The truth is, indeed, that large forces, political and national movements, were less intelligible, less interesting to our author than purely human qualities. Hence a personal quarrel, a conversation, even a keen, witty epigram, is too often made to account for a revolution or a conquest. If Crœsus delays the subjugation of the Ægean islanders, it is because Pittacos brings him the pretended information that they are purchasing horses to invade Lydia. When he exclaims in delight, that they should thus deliver themselves into his hand, the bold Hellenic tyrant points out to his mightier neighbor the exactly similar folly of the landsman assailing the masters of the sea.

The very first sustained picturesque tale of Book I. illustrates this quality still better. If Crœsus's ancestor Gyges, a captain of the royal guard, dethroned and succeeded his master Myrsilos, the last of the Heracleidai, we may well believe that the monarch was degenerate and foolish, or even that the plottings of the harem may have hastened his fall and uplifted the "mayor of the palace." But Myrsilos's mad admiration for his own wife, his determination that Gyges shall see her disrobed, the reluctant submission of the courtier, the detection and vengeance carried out by the enraged lady,—are all reported as by an eye-and-ear witness; and then, as if to intimate the character of his real sources of information, Herodotos remarks

that Archilochos the Parian wrote a poem in iambic trimeter on the subject. If a lampoon by that soldier of fortune did contain so high-colored a story, no other archives would have been ransacked to refute it. Pity, that the ring which made Gyges invisible had not yet been invented, or perhaps belonged to one of the three or more other versions which may well have been current.

Plato, Republic, 359 D, 612 B.

Herodotos, as an historian, is an eminently pious man. That is, he believes that human affairs are plainly guided by divine beings. That some oracles have been purchased by bribes he is aware, yet he believes the Pythia at Delphi, and other mediums, to be in truth the human mouthpieces of the gods. The oracles which he repeats are often, perhaps usually, ambiguous. The most famous case of all is when Crœsus, about to attack Cyrus, is assured that he "will destroy a great empire." Yet in adversity the conquered and captive monarch is himself convinced that he should have asked, and could have learned, whether his own or Cyrus's empire was referred to. So the tale is told, at least. Herodotos himself may have been as advanced a sceptic as Anaxagoras: we can never know.

It must be confessed that a large vein of morbid pessimism, colored by Oriental fatalism, is often seen in Herodotos. The gods do not merely punish presumptuous sin, they are themselves jealous of any human prosperity or happiness which seems to approach their own. This is the very error which Aischylos had eloquently refuted. Painless death in early youth is the best boon Heaven itself can bestow upon the most favored of mortals. This last belief is enforced in characteristic fashion by the beautiful story of Cleobis and Biton, the dutiful sons, whose mother prays for their highest happiness, and whose sleep of exhaustion passes into the longer slumber from which there is no return to life's

Herod., I., 31.

feverish dream. This idyllic tale, which appealed powerfully to that melancholy mood common to Greek and Anglo-Saxon, is put into the mouth of the sage and humane Solon, who, rebuking Crœsus's presumption, evidently voices the best thought of Hellenism as held by the chronicler himself.

But the political insight of our author improves, his views of Providence grow more enlightened, his dignity as a real historian is more constantly remembered, as the great tragedy of Xerxes's defeat passes like a splendid pageant across the scene. The just tribute to Athens, rendered after her presidency of the voluntary Delian league had become an oppressive rule over sullen and dangerous subjects, perhaps after the blacker tragedy of long, destructive civil war throughout Hellas had already begun, is a favorable example of clear and fearless argument:

"And here I feel constrained to deliver an opinion which most men I know will mislike, but which, as it seems to me to be true, I am determined not to withhold. Had the Athenians from fear of the approaching danger quitted their country, or had they without quitting it submitted to the power of Xerxes, there would certainly have been no attempt to resist the Persians by sea; in which case the course of events by land would have been the following: Though the Peloponnesians might have carried ever so many breastworks across the Isthmus, yet their allies would have fallen off from the Lacedæmonians, not by voluntary desertion, but because town after town must have been taken by the fleet of the barbarians; and so the Lacedæmonians would at last have stood alone, and standing alone, would have displayed prodigies of valor and died nobly. Either they would have done this, or else, before it came to that extremity, seeing one Greek state after another embrace the cause of the Medes, they would have come to terms with King Xerxes, and thus either way Greece would have been brought under Persia. For I cannot understand of what possible use the walls across

vii., 139.



the Isthmus could have been, if the King had had the mastery of the sea. If then a man should now say that the Athenians were the saviours of Greece, he would not exceed the truth. For they truly held the scales, and whichever side they espoused must have carried the day. They, too, it was, who, when they had determined to maintain the freedom of Greece, roused up that portion of the Greek nation which had not gone over to the Medes; and so, next to the gods, they repulsed the invader. Even the terrible oracles which reached them from Delphi, and struck fear into their hearts, failed to persuade them to fly from Greece. They had the courage to remain faithful to their land and await the coming of the foe."

Yet the allusion to the oracles recalls Herodotos to his unquestioning faith in such divine guidance. The first response to the envoys at Delphi had predicted in terrific figures the fall of their city and the destruction of their temples, and ended:

"Hie ye forth from my shrine, and plunge your spirits in sorrow!"

But utterly refusing to accept this as Apollo's final word, the legates by much supplication extorted a somewhat more comforting utterance. This contains the famous allusion to the "wooden walls," which were to furnish the Athenians their only refuge. While the same Delphic oracle had told the defeated and captive Crœsus that the Fates (Moirai) ordained the fall of Sardis, though Apollo, by intercession with them, had secured three years' delay, yet on this occasion we have a different, though equally naïve, account of the divine rule:

Herod., vii., 141.

"Pallas has not been able to soften the lord of Olympos,
Praying to Zeus full often, and urging with excellent counsel."

Themistocles alone could expound these utterances, nota-



SOPHOCLES.

Antique Statue in the Lateran Museum.



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bly the application of the phrase "wooden walls" to the fleet he himself had so long been preparing. The suspicion that he had also inspired the utterance to some extent was too widely and persistently current to have failed to reach the historian's ears. But he only goes on calmly in the next chapters to mention the discussion over the meaning, and the wise statesmanship of Themistocles in the years of preparation. He neither combats, nor openly shares, our suspicions against the oracle.

The history ends fittingly, with the final destruction of Xerxes's bridge, and the complete departure of all surviving Persians from Europe. Last of all, somewhat like the quiet closing word of the chorus in an Attic tragedy, Herodotos manages, with a frank awkwardness that defies criticism, to bring upon his final page the warning of Cyrus the Great, when his Persians were bent on migrating to a more fertile and favored land: "Soft countries give birth to soft men. There is no region which produces very delightful fruits and at the same time men of warlike spirit."

Those who perceive how cleverly the true moral of the tale is thus uttered through Persian lips, to avoid drawing down, by undue exultation over Greek success, the dreaded wrath of divine Nemesis, will probably agree that Herodotos's many-sided genius included all the literary art needed for supreme success. The simple fact is that creating his prose style, and composing history, practically, without models, he has retained down to the present day a popularity, both among boyish readers and with the maturest and wisest of students, hardly rivalled by historian, poet, or romancer since. This is largely due to his charming skill as a story-teller. Polycrates and his ring, Arion and the dolphin, Crœsus's pride and Solon's reproof, and a hundred other tales, will always give delight. And yet, we do our author no justice, unless we put ourselves wholly under his spell while read-

iii., 39-46; i., 23-24; i., 30-33.

ing consecutively the last four books at least, letting pass before our dreaming eyes that splendid world-wide panorama, the invasion and retreat of Xerxes. This volume stands beside Homer, perhaps not second even to that, in any library or book-shelf devoted to classical antiquity.

The dominant influence of Ionic Greek in prose is illustrated in the same century again by the physician Hippocrates, who was born in the Dorian island of Cos: yet his numerous surviving essays are also in essentially the same dialect as Herodotos's history. Indeed, these two authors of Dorian origin supply our chief materials for study of the Ionic speech of their age.

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CHAPTER XXXII

THUKYDIDES

Of the first and greatest Attic historian it is difficult to speak without noting the many points of contrast with his Ionian contemporary: but these striking differences will usually be evident to the attentive student. Thukydides was of an honored and wealthy Athenian stock, perhaps akin to the tyrant Peisistratos. From Thracian ancestors he inherited large estates in that country. There can be no doubt as to his educational advantages. As his Pericles proudly speaks, so the mature historian felt: "Athens is the school of Hellas, and the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace." The immortal dramatists, architects, artists, whose names adorn the Periclean time, had about them not only throngs of clever craftsmen, eager to serve as hands, and even as eyes, to their inspired masters, but a whole people, worthy to be spectators and auditors of their genius. Such a theatre, in particular, might teach any youth how to play his part with dignity upon the larger stage.

Thuk., II., 41.

Thukydides appears to have been thoroughly imbued with the materialistic doctrines of Anaxagoras's school. No hint as to any system of divine government escapes from his pen. He traces events to purely human causes and forces, as calmly as Gibbon or Hume. Indeed, this has much to do with his surprisingly modern tone.

He was of mature age when the great strife with Sparta began. A year or two later he was himself stricken with the plague, which he has so vividly described. In the ninth year of the Peloponnesian war he commanded the Athenian fleet on the Thracian coast, and failed to arrive in time to relieve the city of Amphipolis before it fell into the hands of the Spartan Brasidas. He haughtily omits to incorporate into his history any defence of his action, but on a much later page, which we may call the preface to Part II., to make clear his opportunities for full information and impartial judgment, he mentions that he was condemned to death, withdrew into banishment, and lived chiefly under Spartan protection for twenty years. This period included extensive journeys, embracing in their range all the Ægean, Sicily, and Italy. Shortly after his recall, at the close of the war, he perished by a violent death, probably through an assassin's hand.

ii., 48.

iv., 103-7.

v., 26.

His history of the Peloponnesian War, then, is an account of events wherein he himself played a trying part, and was written under a sense of deadly injustice. Yet his judgment is wonderfully calm and clear. Perhaps his detestation for the demagogue Cleon, though it may be fully justified, is colored by a sense of grievous personal injury. His yet warmer admiration for Pericles is frankly avowed. Even here, he shows not a tithe of the heat, in love or hatred, displayed by our own brilliant chronicler, Motley, toward the Orange or the Alva of an alien race and a bygone century. Usually, however, he neither praises nor blames, but sets forth acts and words without comment.

His single essay, if we may so call it, is naturally divided into two sections by the ineffective "Peace of Nikias," and culminates most dramatically in the tale of

the great expedition sent by the Athenians into Sicily, and its annihilation under the walls of Syracuse. This tragedy, which fills Books VI. and VII., reminds us somewhat of Herodotos's account of Salamis. Herein less happy than his great rival, the Athenian lived to compose one more book only, in a comparatively sketchy form, and breaks off midway in a sentence on the events of the year 411 B.C. This last book, moreover, lacks entirely the set orations and debates which are so striking a feature of the earlier portions.

"As to the speeches which were made either before or during the war, it was hard for me, and for others who reported them to me, to recollect the exact words. I have therefore put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion, expressed as I thought he would be likely to express them, while at the same time I endeavored, as nearly as I could, to give the general purport of what was actually said." I., 22.

Such a confession would at once assign a volume published to-day to the class of historical romances. Yet Thukydides certainly went farther than he here intimates. He gives, at much length, speeches of which he can never have had any detailed report at all, like the great debates of the Spartan allies before the declaration of war. Orations made on totally different occasions answer each other's argument point by point in incredible fashion. Nearly all the speeches limit themselves essentially to authentic facts, and to arguments having some solid basis, as real special pleading, under stress of great excitement, never does.

The discussion between the unfortunate Melians and the merciless Athenians, at the close of Book V., looks, even on the printed page, like a spirited scene of tragedy, *e.g.*, the collision of Antigone and Creon. The Melians' reliance on "the favor of the gods, which has hitherto

preserved us," seems misplaced. On the prompt murder of the whole adult male population which soon follows the chronicler makes no comment; but in the next sentence begins the account of the expedition to Sicily, in which all Athens's best youth was to be engulfed. The Athenian essayist at least took advantage of the dramatic contrast.

These speeches reveal a breadth of political insight and philosophic thought possible to few,—often they betray a detailed prophetic knowledge of future occurrences possible to none,—save him who writes in later years, after the event. Clearly, they were an artistic, we may say a dramatic necessity for the austere recorder, who himself remains unseen, but through the lips of others sets forth the larger aspects and significance of the confusing strife.

Finally, nearly all the speeches bristle with complex, overloaded sentences, with harsh constructions, in general with difficulties which no Greek audience, even, could have surmounted at a single hearing. We know that Antiphon and his disciples, not to mention Lysias's alluring, limpid style, never were guilty of such repellent oratory. These speeches have, indeed, a rugged nobility of their own, and they are clearly, in the main, the composition of one hard thinker and laborious writer, cut off for many years from the one good school of Attic utterance and rhetorical grace. Even of Pericles's three great orations this is probably true, though the youthful Thukydides had no doubt heard them. The thoughts, surely, are those of the statesman, but we cannot believe more than one Athenian ever framed such fearful sentences.

Cicero, though fond of believing himself perfectly bilingual, found the speeches in the history largely unintelligible. Even the omniscient, indefatigable Macaulay remarks, that if a sentence *will not* give up its meaning at a second or third attentive reading, we may better give it

up, and pass on. Modern commentators will only concede that two or three brief passages are unintelligible, or require heroic emendation. The ordinary narrative is by comparison simple: yet when one brief episode is really treated almost in Herodotos's easy, flowing style, the old commentators cry in amazement, "The lion smiled!" Certainly, the complete perusal of this one moderate volume must tax for years the best powers of a mature, acute, and well-stored mind. It is worth all it costs.

Wise critics have declared that no period of ancient or modern history in any land is so well known to us as these two decades in Greek annals. When we remember that all the testimony was collected by a single reporter, from excited witnesses filled with fiercest passions, in the many widely sundered and isolated regions of a country almost without roads, where at nearly every dale or crest he found a new and independent community,—the exploit of Thukydides remains without a parallel.

Some undoubted flaws can be noted. His citation of a treaty corresponds exactly in purport, but varies in many single words, from the official copy on stone which has been recovered from the soil. On a point of topography, *e.g.*, a Lesbian promontory, he is occasionally in error. Even after charging all we may to the long line of dreamy pedantic scribes who from age to age have recopied our manuscripts, it can no doubt be demonstrated that Thukydides, the son of Oloros, was human, hence fallible.

Many voices, among which Macaulay's trumpet-tones are especially distinguishable, acclaim him the greatest historian of all time. Such a judgment should at least be qualified. Like a Greek architect or dramatist, indeed with as noble a reticence, self-control, sense of limitation as either Ictinos or Sophocles, Thukydides did complete, with conscious mastery, the task he undertook: for we may fairly regard the calamity at Syracuse as the culminating scene.

But even from his picture of Athens, nearly all that we value most, tragedy, comedy, Socratic philosophy, the plastic arts, the teeming life of a whole people, are absent, except for a few lofty allusions in the Periclean orations.

Furthermore, a single epoch, and that his own day, above all an epoch of destructive and demoralizing war, must fail to call out the highest powers and usefulness of the ideal historian. Humanity has other and more edifying triumphs than those of any battle-field, however glorious. Rigidly limited to his distracted little Hellenic world, with perhaps a contemptuous glance at the "barbarians," Thukydides could have no conception of any such complex Kosmos as ours. Compared with the wider outlook of a Gibbon, of a Von Ranke, possibly even of a Parkman, the frame of Thukydides seems contracted, his message monotonous. While he could, of course, have no conception of mediæval and modern history, his profound and wise distrust of epic and myth as safe data left him curiously little past to serve as perspective. This is almost painfully felt through his first twenty chapters, which seek to prove that no earlier war compared in importance with his theme. Certainly Herodotos has provided for our youthtime an infinitely more varied and enjoyable tale.

Of this rivalry, indeed, the Athenian was haughtily conscious, when he said of his own volume: "Very likely the strictly historical character of my narrative may be disappointing to the ear. . . . My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition for the moment." He even descends to rather petty detail once or twice to traverse statements of Herodotos, whom he nowhere names. But as Goethe said of himself and Schiller, so of the two supreme Greek historians, we should not waste much time in attempting to decide relative values, but be devoutly thankful for both. They represent two singularly diverse views of the control

I., 22.

over human destiny, of the sequence in events, and of method in their portrayal.

In one large feature they are alike. Both histories are dramatic, each culminates in a tragic and sudden reversal of fortune. Neither Xerxes in 481, nor the Athenian people in 415 B.C., had dreamed of possible failure. The most astute of ancient critics, Dionysios of Halicarnassos, blames Thukydides for selecting a painful and ineffectual subject. But that subject inevitably absorbed and mastered its chronicler: and the result justifies all. He is not a quotable author. His great effects are those of mass. But the tale of the Sicilian expedition, or the funeral oration, is unique in its power, which is largely due to a certain dignified reticence. These two seem as imperishable as Antigone, or the maidens of the Erechtheion.

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See Collins's volume in "Ancient Classics." In Abbot's Hellenica Jebb has a valuable article on Thukydides's speeches.



CHAPTER XXXIII

THE EARLIER ATTIC ORATORS

THIS chapter must be relatively brief. Oratory is potentially a fine art, and the effective speaker should doubtless be a master of literary style; though a certain dramatic versatility may aid him more in a crisis. Rhetoric take its very name from the speaker. Yet the chief part of his power and accomplishment is perishable. He pleads, usually, to win belief, to influence action, on some special occasion or controverted problem. Perhaps his best eloquence is almost always largely inspired by the needs of the instant. Impromptu discussion, the rapier-thrust of deadly retort, the fury of popular opposition, are his final and severest tests. Only under such conditions did the powers of Daniel O'Connell, Wendell Phillips, or Henry Ward Beecher, fully rouse themselves. At present nearly all our best speaking is done by lawyers, trained by their contests in the courts. Even in the most carefully studied efforts we strive to give the impression, at least, of momentary impulse.

This art, then, lacks, in itself, the essential quality of permanence. Pericles, perhaps the most successful of all Attic speakers, has no place in literature. Most of the extant Greek orators are little better known, to the general student of classic life, than is Hippocrates, or Euclid. Demosthenes, alone, is a figure of heroic stature.

THE SOPHISTS.

The first practical teachers of rhetoric and oratory are usually grouped under the much-abused name of Sophists.

As the lyric poets had wandered wide from their homes, especially to the courts of princely patrons, so these professors of style and delivery naturally found a haven and a market, above all, in Athens, the centre of constant litigation, both between natives and among their numerous subject-allies. Every Athenian must be ready to defend himself at need, or even to impeach his enemy before the proper tribunal. If he could not compose his speech, he must buy it ready-made and learn it.

Even the greatest of these rhetorical teachers, Sicilian Gorgias and Protagoras from Abdera, are now remembered almost solely through rather unscrupulous use made of them by Plato, as opponents, "men of straw," to be overthrown by the more deadly dialectic of Socrates. Prodicos, whose special devotion to synonyms and their accurate distinction is wittily parodied where he appears, as a minor figure, in Plato's "Protagoras," has, after all, been more fortunate in survival. Why Xenophon in the "Memorabilia" quoted a famous sketch of his at length is not clear. It is the description of young Heracles at the Parting of the Roads, tempted by Pleasure and drawn the other way by Virtue. There is no reason to doubt that the other Sophists paid similar tribute to conventional morality. Gorgias, in his Olympic oration of 408 B.C., urged with large national patriotism the union of distracted Hellas in a new war against Persia.

Protagoras, 337 A-C.

Xen. Mem., II., 1, 21-33.

In general, these men ill deserved the evil repute they have borne so long. The Socratic ethic attacked them, naturally enough, as an integral and prominent part of a whole social, moral and political world with which the idealist is forever at war. In themselves, and in the Attic community, their function was more natural and more necessary than is to-day a business college or school of oratory. They took fees for their work: so should all

men. They acquired wealth, wide fame, troops of devoted followers. Not even Plato shall make us think that a crime. If Protagoras did profess in so many words to make "the worse appear the better argument," it is no more than every criminal lawyer constantly undertakes. So his treatise beginning "As to the gods, I cannot know that they are nor that they are not," is a frank and courageous avowal. Lucretius is only more cautious, reserving a remote corner of his universe for powerless and unknowable "divinities." But we must turn from these teachers of rhetoric to their Athenian pupils, the orators proper.

ANTIPHON AND ANDOKIDES.

Antiphon appears on the public scene only for a tragic moment. Leader in the oligarchical revolution of the Four Hundred, he was condemned and put to death upon the prompt revival of popular power. Thukydides praises him with unusual warmth, as a most able defender of persecuted men, himself reluctant to begin any controversy, yet generally hated for his supposed ability to make "the worse appear the better cause." This popular distrust of the glib-tongued advocate is still perfectly intelligible.

411 B.C. Thukyd., viii., 68.

Of Antiphon's fifteen extant speeches twelve are grouped in "tetralogies," *i.e.*, he gives, in outline, proper opening and closing briefs for both prosecutor and defendant in a supposed trial. The most curious is a case where a boy, running across the gymnasium, has been accidentally killed by a youth practising with the spear. The guilt, and penalty of solemn exile for manslaughter, might in such an event finally fall upon the missile itself. Antiphon's "Old Attic" style resembles Thukydides's in its austere unadorned quality; but he is comparatively easy reading.

Andokides was not a trained orator. As a rather dissipated young aristocrat he fell under suspicion of complicity

in that famous mutilation of the Hermæ which horrified Athens just before the great Sicilian expedition sailed. Though he turned informer, perhaps against innocent men, he was himself banished until the close of the war. Soon after he was again accused, but acquitted, of revealing the Mysteries. His speeches, therefore, throw a cross-light, but not the white ray of pure truth, on these two dark and much-debated subjects. He gained fleeting political influence and more lasting wealth, but seems to have been a roving adventurer with few moral scruples. His style is often interestingly untechnical, even colloquial.

415 B.C.

LYSIAS AND ISAIOS.

Lysias, the first great master of the speech-writing profession, was the son of the wealthy resident-alien—"metoikos"—Kephalos, invited to Athens by Pericles. The venerable father makes a fine appearance in the opening scene of Plato's Republic, whence Cicero culled nearly all the best passages of his dialogue on Old Age.

Lysias's brother was foully murdered, and he himself narrowly escaped, in the reign of terror under the rapacious Thirty Tyrants. The grateful democracy, whose return he still had the means to aid effectively, gave to him and other loyal "metics" full Attic citizenship, but later the general act was decided to be illegal. His powerful impeachment of Eratosthenes, one of the Thirty, was made during his brief enjoyment of full citizenship, and in his own person. It contains a most graphic account of his wrongs. Rarely is a scene more clearly set forth by any artist.

404-3 B.C.

Lysias through many years thereafter wrote for pay the speeches of his unskilled patrons. They are cleverly adapted to the varied character of the speakers, whether it be a crippled pauper pleading for his dole, a wronged hus-

band of humble rustic position, a sharp-witted politician, or a gallant young military commander. The demand to enforce the death-penalty for a "corner" in grain, the defence of the man accused of digging up an old olive-root in his own field, throw curious lights on Attic ethics.

On every page we find a remarkable clearness, fluency, ease, finally an unadorned grace and music of phrase, which the great critic Dionysios makes a decisive test, to distinguish Lysias's genuine work from any spurious oration. The thirty-four surviving speeches, though not all are complete, are worth perusal. We are usually left to curious surmise as to the result.

Isaios of Chalkis, being also an alien, never appeared in person as an Athenian orator. His ten complete orations extant all refer to questions of inheritance, and have little more general interest than the special and specious pleading of a jurist before a court of probate at the present day. His best claim to remembrance is as the teacher of Demosthenes.

ISOCRATES.

436–338 B.C.

The remarkably long life of Isocrates, his services both to Athens and to Greece as a whole, his large views of the great forces which were reshaping Hellas and the ancient world, made him a stately figure, which grew quickly dim to the after-time, because he failed to take high rank either among aggressive leaders in action or as a creative thinker. It may not be too bold to compare him to our own Edward Everett, whose name is associated with no great measure or party policy, who, on the other hand, had no sympathy with the newest forces in literature and speculative thought, with Wordsworth's nature-poetry, for instance, or Emersonian mysticism: and yet he is still pointed out, with national pride, as our most

faultless, finished, and artificial orator, as the foremost man of culture in his generation.

At the end of Plato's "Phaidros" there is an enthusiastic sketch of Isocrates as a young man, which recalls Emerson's description of his Greek professor: and perhaps Socrates really attempted to win him for true philosophy. In the first decade of the fourth century he was a paid writer of speeches, later opened a regular school of oratory, despite his own weak voice and shyness in public. General culture, or fitness for citizenship, was the larger aim of his curriculum, and to this he applied the name *philosophia*. He seems to be bitterly attacked, though not named, in Plato's "Euthydemos," as a mongrel creature, neither philosopher nor man of the world.

Great statesmen, orators, historians, were among his pupils. Cicero remarks: "From Isocrates's school, as from the Trojan horse, came forth chieftains only." The course was three or four years long, the fee large: two thousand drachmas or francs, while the purchasing power of money was at least tenfold its present amount. The great orations of the professor were elaborated as model school exercises, and after many years filing were published as pamphlets, to widen his fame, and also to influence the course of large political events in Hellas. His writing is always clear. His sentences, though often as long as Gibbon's or even as Ruskin's, are regularly and transparently constructed.

De Orat., II., 22, 94.

The style of Isocrates is not, however, a delight to most modern readers. His very regularity grows monotonous. We realize that every phrase is balanced, every word culled, quite as much for sound as for meaning. When the normal or usual order of words is abandoned, it is almost invariably to avoid a hiatus. We soon begin to crave some such trifling discord. The level of thought never rises to really poetic or creative power, and usually floods the shal-

low levels of commonplace. In general, we feel ourselves in contact with a refined, well-stored, second-rate, and dependent intellect.

In our collection stand, first, six of the earlier speeches written for others. In one of these cases Lysias was retained on the other side. The oration "On the Exchange of Property" is a long and tedious defence of Isocrates's personal career, and was written much later, in 353 B.C. The title recalls a curious Attic usage. A citizen, if required to perform a costly public duty, like equipping a galley or a dramatic chorus, could make formal claim that another wealthier man had been passed over; and the latter must either assume the task or submit to a complete interchange of estates. At least, that was the legal theory, though perhaps the action never really went farther than a decision, which man should properly bear the public burden.

Passing over such mere professional exercises as the "Encomium on Helen"—always a favorite school-subject—we come to Isocrates's first great essay, the Panegyric on Athens, published as if delivered to the assembled Greeks at Olympia in 380 B.C. He had spent ten years upon it: but the remark that Alexander conquered Asia in less time is not a fair criticism. The study is a creditable proof of his devotion, with all his powers, to a patriotic purpose.

This pamphlet contributed perceptibly to the formation of the second Athenian league, which never indeed approached in power or wealth the old empire that had grown out of the Confederacy of Delos, but did eventually make Athens the natural though hopeless rallying point against Philip of Macedon.

As literature, this oration may be best contrasted with the funeral oration of Pericles, in Thukydides's second book. It is inferior to it in nobility and force, but altogether wider in historical range: and certainly infinitely



MENANDER.

Antique Statue in the Vatican Museum.



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easier reading. Isocrates's speeches of this type are perhaps just about as high a form of writing as our modern manuals of Greek composition should ever attempt to emulate.

The brief supremacy in Hellenic affairs won and held by Epaminondas for his native Thebes was always most hateful to her nearest neighbor. Isocrates's "Plataicos," composed in 373 B.C., is an appeal to Athens and an attack on the Thebans, put into the mouth of the little border-town which had aided Athens so valorously in the two great crises of the fifth century, the Persian and Peloponnesian wars.

The still glowing question of local or national patriotism is raised by the "Philippos," an appeal to the Macedonian king to stanch all the feuds among the Hellenic cities and lead the united Hellenes against their ancient Persian foe. Modern scholars, like Dr. Wheeler, see in Demosthenes's later career, at least, devotion to an ideal of patriotism, heroic indeed, but hopelessly narrow and belated. The large results of history, the formation of great radical units like the German empire and the kingdom of Italy, the evolution of confederations like our own Union of States, strengthen such views immeasurably. Yet it is a shock to hear that the author of the Panegyricos, a loyal lover of Athens whose life had even overlapped the last years of Pericles himself, lived to lay the past glories of his own and all the other cities sung by Pindar at the feet of the rude Emathian conqueror. There is a poetic fitness in the tale, whether it be true or only well-invented, that the news of Athens's final defeat at Chaironeia, and the certainty of her subjugation by Philip,

"Kill'd with grief the old man eloquent."

This career is curiously modern in many of its phases. It illustrates, also, with merciless clearness, the steady de-

cadence of Hellenic force in life and in literature. Athens shares the general decline. Not even a Demosthenes, or a Plato, could save a race which no longer deserved to regain power or to retain freedom. The fatal drain upon the best Attic blood in the Peloponnesian war, especially by the Syracusan calamity and the ravages of the Thirty Tyrants, could never be overcome. Athens remained through the fourth century "the school of Hellas," in the more academic sense only: not as Pericles meant the phrase.

But we have already heard a manlier step ascending the real bema. Through Hellas is to ring for many a year the fearless voice of Athens's last great statesman.

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CHAPTER XXXIV

DEMOSTHENES AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

DEMOSTHENES.

(385 B.C.—232 B.C.)

As the tireless opponent of Macedonian Philip, this most famous of orators occupies for more than a decade the chief place in Attic annals, and is a leading figure in the political life of all Hellas. Though hardly a line of his writings has the calm impartiality of true history, we have often no other sources of knowledge, even concerning most important events. Indeed, there are long chapters in Grote's eleventh volume, especially, where conflicting statements of Demosthenes and Aischines are constantly the sole authorities to be cited. Often the speeches we read are by no means those delivered, but revisions in the light of later events. The very partisanship and fierce passions with which they are filled bring before us the more vividly, if not accurately, the events on which they offer the testimony of a most prejudiced witness. The large historical background can, however, hardly be even suggested here. Our task must be to regard the speeches of Demosthenes, in the shape finally recorded by him, as monuments of Attic prose. Yet the character of the speaker, the circumstances of their utterance, must, of course, also be constantly present in our minds.

Demosthenes was early taught the need of the pleader's art. Born to wealth, he lost his father at seven. The three trustees of the will wasted and misappropriated the

estate. On coming to the age of eighteen he began legal measures against his guardians, and spent the next three years with Isaios, fitting himself to speak effectively.

Four pleas made in prosecuting these suits are extant, but how far he succeeded in regaining the property is not known. These experiences naturally opened to him a congenial career. Until his fortieth year he was busy as a writer of speeches for others, so was probably dependent on his earnings. That he gave instruction in elocution as well is asserted by Aischines, and is highly probable. His progress toward public prominence was steady and deliberate.

The story of Demosthenes's physical defects, and his long struggle to overcome them, is extremely well known. Details such as his haranguing the sea-waves, secluding himself in a cave for practice, shaving half his head to make this seclusion compulsory, suspending a sword over his twitching shoulder, etc., may well be later inventions. That a long and painful training was necessary, we cannot doubt. With all the vigorous gesticulation and constant action natural to the oratory of Southern Europe, he would require the ease and instinctive grace of a consummate actor. Perfect enunciation, command of varied and sonorous tones, tireless endurance, were no less requisite. No man ever faced a more sensitive, critical, and merciless audience. His statues, as compared with Sophocles's or Aischines's, indicate that his natural disadvantages were great.

He reveals a wide familiarity with political history and legal antiquities. The story that he copied out Thukydides's entire volume eight times is seriously told by Lucian. (The number may be a corruption of an allusion to the eight books of the history.) There is, indeed, a strong bond of kinship between these two Attic authors. A certain austere and noble reserve, a sort of granitic and heroic

courage, a joyless but unrepining Stoicism in the very temper, we seem to feel in both.

But while the historian often struggles painfully to utter his thought, Demosthenes is complete master of his own forceful style, with its numberless variations, from the brief flashing sentences that seem all but Laconic to the stately periods which have the ease and clearness of Isocrates's, with tenfold their strength. There is no mere sparring. There is no time for the play of lighter humor. Every blow strikes home. "In Cicero," says Quintilian, "not a word is omitted which could be properly expressed: in Demosthenes not one is uttered which can possibly be spared." In certain tricks of Greek syntax growing too prominent in his day, especially the cumulative use of "articular infinitives," he also indulges more freely than we might wish. Yet the general impression is always of easy mastery, compression, and resistless force. Furthermore, in those qualities—as well as in that Delivery to which he is said to have assigned the first, second, and third place of importance—he made tireless effort and constant improvement to the last.

Like nearly all the most illustrious Greeks Demosthenes has, with the other artistic gifts, a powerful imagination. Even when he has no intention of misleading or overstating, we feel that he idealizes and glorifies the sober facts which he touches. Heroic deeds of the forefathers, vicissitudes of his own times, the reluctance and vacillation of the peace-loving Athenian people, the atrocities of Philip, are set forth picturesquely, fervidly, unforgettably. Above all, the clear fire of a generous, fearless patriotism, a passionate love of Athens, fuses all else in its white heat, and seems at times almost to consume the orator.

Many details of political intrigue in the fourth century before Christ are now obscure and unedifying. Certain features of the speeches, like the foul personal abuse

heaped upon Aischines and his parents, must offend our taste ; especially as these scandals grow more and more extravagant and reckless with each renewal of the encounter. Aischines here sets a more creditable standard of self-control.

Some may even feel that Demosthenes ought to have risen, like Isocrates, to a consciousness of larger Hellenic patriotism, and welcomed the Macedonian kings, more heartily than Bavarian statesmen in 1870 did the Hohenzollerns, as the long-desired leaders of the entire nation. Yet we must confess to a far warmer personal regard for him who, like Kossuth, Kosciusko, Calhoun, fights on undismayed, even in a belated or hopeless cause. And surely it may be well argued, that the Athens of Philemon and Menander, of Plato, of Demosthenes himself, with its memories of a yet greater political past, was still the noblest and fittest centre for nearly all that was best in Greek life. At least we would not have the most eloquent and fearless of Athenians feel otherwise.

Private legal practice, Demosthenes tells us, he abandoned when he became a public character. From the year 359 before Christ a series of speeches, though delivered by others, showed a bold and sincere effort to correct political abuses. It is curious that the very first is in opposition to the bestowal of the usual golden wreath or crown upon unfaithful servants of the state. Four years later the patriotic and noble plea against Leptines, delivered in person, defended the exemption from special taxation accorded to the descendants of great public benefactors. The law and logic may be questioned. The pride in the heroic past, the demand to offer every incentive to patriotism among future citizens, must appeal to all.

A still more instructive speech, published though never

delivered, is that against Midias, or "Concerning the face-slapping." When he suffered this indignity, Demosthenes was fulfilling the public and semi-sacred functions of Choregos, in the state theatre itself. This is an important source of our knowledge as to fourth-century drama.

The banishment of the able statesman Kallistratos in 361, the disastrous war with the revolted subject-allies in 357–55, had reduced Athens to the rank of an isolated second-rate Hellenic power. Demosthenes's general discontent with these conditions became centred, about 351, in his dread and hatred for the aggressive yet tactful and wily Philip. The four "Philippics" proper, the three speeches on Olynthos, and others of this period, are all in the same general key.

That the deadliest danger was within, in the hearts of an idle, pleasure-loving people, ready to trust to mercenary troops yet prompt to punish their commanders for inevitable failure, no man understood better. "If Philip should die," he cried, "the Athenians would quickly make themselves another Philip."

The ground steadily lost was never regained. In 346 B.C., as the official champion of the Amphiktionic league, Philip ended the ten-years-long "Sacred War," laid waste the homes of the sacrilegious Phocians who had seized and plundered the Delphic temple, and received their forfeited votes in the ancient council, with the official right to interfere in the affairs of Central Greece. Athens, which once in earlier years had stopped this southward march at Thermopylæ, could hardly hope to resist him again. This was the year, it will be remembered, when Isocrates hailed Philip as the natural leader of Hellas against Persia. That in such a foreign crusade the Greeks might sink their local loyalty and be welded into a nation, was the dream of many, but it was never shared by Demosthenes.

Not until 340 did the orator exchange his position, as a

hostile critic against a dilatory and conciliating policy, for an effective leadership, with a majority of the Athenians, and some other allies, behind him. Only two years later, the defeat at Chaironeia in Bœotia ended all effective resistance to Philip. Thereafter Athens had no foreign policy. It was simply by inaction that she escaped the fate of Thebes. The king's clemency in sparing the popular leaders, and even refraining from an actual occupation of Athens, must have been a great surprise to all men. The Athenians showed some courage, even in calamity, by inviting Demosthenes to deliver the customary eulogy on the slain. Speaking of this, with just pride, eight years afterward, he adds:

Battle of Chaironeia, 338 B.C.

"Having to order the funeral banquet, according to custom, at the house of the nearest relative to the dead, the people ordered it at mine: because, though each to his own was nearer of kin than I, none was so near to them all collectively."

De Corona, § 288.

As a matter of fact, this was no doubt one of the many occasions when Demosthenes was eagerly foremost in lavishing his private means for the state's most urgent need.

Twice already Demosthenes had attacked Aischines, unsuccessfully, for corruption and treason in his relations with Philip. That the king found his wealth often effective in silencing opposition is but too clear. Demosthenes quotes in bitterness of spirit Philip's boast, that no fortress in Hellas could withstand him, if he could but drive an ass laden with gold up to the gate.

In 336 Ctesiphon, an obscure partisan, moved that a golden wreath be given to Demosthenes for his public services. This was an honor very generally bestowed, even for trifling acts. Aischines thereupon indicted Ctesiphon for illegality. Why the trial was put off for six years neither

orator cares to explain, and we can but darkly surmise. The real matter at issue was, of course, the whole career of Demosthenes, and to this somewhat invidious theme, after brushing aside minor legal technicalities as to the place and time of the presentation, the defence is frankly devoted.

Alexander was at this time in the full tide of his Asiatic conquests. We must concede that Demosthenes's view of that magnificent career is pitifully inadequate. The greatest of orators sees in the chivalric young champion of Hellenism, as he clears the paths for its world-wide expansion, only a common scourge of Greeks and barbarians. He exults only in the grim remembrance, that time-servers, bribe-takers, traitors, are at least involved in the common ruin. And yet, any other attitude would have deprived us of the noblest passage in all classic oratory.

"If the results had been foreknown to all, not even so should the Commonwealth have abandoned her policy, if she had any regard for glory, or ancestry, or futurity. She appears to have failed in her enterprise: a fate to which all mankind are liable, if the Deity so wills. . . . In no time past could our city be persuaded to attach herself in subjection to the powerful and unjust: through every age has she persevered in a struggle for leadership, and honor, and glory. . . . Each man considered that he was born not to his father or mother alone, but also to his country. . . . Such a man will sooner perish than behold her in slavery, and will regard the insults and indignities, which must be borne by a commonwealth enslaved, as more terrible than death. . . . The duty of brave men has been performed by all: their fortune has been such as the Deity assigned to each."

De Corona, §§ 199–208.

Aischines failed to secure the votes of a fifth of the jury, so was heavily fined, debarred from ever bringing a similar suit, and in his mortification left Athens.

Demosthenes himself was banished in 324 on a charge of embezzlement. It was probably a case of political persecution, for after Alexander's death next year he was recalled and took the lead in a last struggle for freedom. The league of Greek cities was promptly beaten in battle at Crannon. Demosthenes fled, but was overtaken, and took poison to save himself from his Macedonian pursuers.

CONTEMPORARY ORATORS.

The mildness of Philip toward Athens, and especially his failure to silence Demosthenes, has been remarked. It may have been prompted by soldierly or kingly disdain for a mere talker: or again, by real liking for a nature as tireless and as fearless as his own. The tale, that he conceded Demosthenes full freedom of speech because he was "the only one of the orators not on the royal pension-list," is surely a bitter partisan invention. Even in Aischines's case, we need not believe in any such vulgar bribery. He may have made himself believe, that prompt submission, which was safer and more profitable to himself, was also for the true interests of Athens. No one questions Isocrates's sincerity. Phokion, who was of the same opinion, is treated by Plutarch as the very type of rugged, old-fashioned conservatism and honesty. He it was who, when once too cordially applauded by the people, exclaimed: "What foolish word, then, have I utttered?"

Aischines had by nature a finer figure and voice, by far, than his opponent. His earlier training as an actor was helpful to him, and he is said to have spoken effectively without having ever written out his speeches. Only three orations of his were known to later antiquity, and they are extant. The one against Ctesiphon, as published, has been revised to meet some of Demosthenes's attacks. There is a tradition that

389–314 B.C.

Aischines used both his own and his rival's speech as models, when in exile, in his Rhodian school of oratory.

Lycurgos, like Phokion, is a somewhat un-Athenian figure, of sturdy character, honest and able as state treasurer for many years. The one speech of his preserved, "Against Leocritos," is in a lofty tone of moral indignation. He is prosecuting a deserter of the Chaironeian campaign, who seven years later ventured back to Athens. Curiously enough, we have in this solemn harangue copious quotations from the older poets: twenty-two verses of Tyrtaios, *fifty-five* in one citation from Euripides's "Erechtheus." The influence of acting upon oratory, of the stage upon the bema, is thus illustrated once more. But a decay of creative power is also indicated.

396 (?)–323 (?) B.C.

Hypereides, after aiding Demosthenes through all the great crises of Philip's time, turned fiercely upon him in the year 324. The circumstances are curious and complicated, and he may have been forced to believe his old comrade guilty. The missing funds were part of a very large sum brought to Athens by Harpalos, an absconding treasurer of Alexander.

Hypereides seems to have been a man of brilliant powers, a wit, even by some ranked first of all the orators. Six of his speeches have been largely recovered in recent times from Egyptian papyri. The conclusion of his funeral oration of 323 is curiously like one of our own Memorial Day addresses. A more original note is heard in his manly appeal against the injustice done to Lycurgos's children, imprisoned after the father's death, for a pretended deficit in his accounts.

"What will they say of him who pass his tomb? 'This man's life was righteous. Put in charge of our finances, he found resources, built the theatre, the music-hall, the docks, constructed galleys and harbors. This is he whom the state deprived of civic rights, whose children it imprisoned!'"

Less fortunate than Demosthenes, Hypereides was captured and tortured to death by the minions of Antipater after the brief war of 323 B.C.

Naturally, real oratory ceased to flourish in Athens with the extinction of freedom. Demetrios of Phaleron is perhaps to be mentioned, as a curious link with the next age. The son of a freedman, he rose to power through his ability in debate. For ten years he ruled Athens in the interests of Macedon. When expelled by his namesake the Besieger (Poliorketes) he fled to Egypt. At his advice, apparently, King Ptolemy founded the Museum and library of Alexandria. Thus he drew vengeance at last on his fickle fellow-citizens, who were pulling down the three hundred and sixty statues they had erected in his honor.

Even the tradition of culture is passing from Athens. For the last time we return to the haughty Periclean age and folk.

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CHAPTER XXXV

SOCRATES

BESIDE history and oratory, we recognize in Attic literature a third large type, chiefly represented by Plato, the greatest master of artistic and imaginative prose utterance that ever lived. With him we venture to associate Xenophon, who, a poor historian, and taking rank as a successful orator only in his own unverified report, is also no esoteric initiate in philosophy. For those two widely divergent careers, however, the joint introduction must be a word as to the most baffling figure that ever walked the ways of Athens, perhaps of any earthly city. Yet Socrates, it is agreed by all authorities, left nothing in writing. The best excuse for this chapter must be, then, that it is a necessary link.

Philosophy will never become, as algebra or logic is sometimes considered, a "closed science," lying unchangeable with all its methods perfected, its problems solved, while research passes on to use those results in wider fields. The earliest philosopher doubtless raised the two queries to which no merely human speculation can ever win the final response: Whence, and Whither? What is the ultimate origin, what the final destiny, of man?

The earlier answers are stammered oftener in verse than in prose: that is, ecstatic vision, and impassioned utterance in the full faith of divine inspiration, come ages before calm speculative thought. That Hesiod really dreamed of the Muses, and believed they did actually ap-

pear to him, we have no right to doubt. They hear, and answer, the cry of his spirit:

Theogony, vss. 108–110.

"Tell how aforetime Gods and Earth came into existence,
Rivers, and Deep unbounded, forever surging and swelling,
Stars that brightly gleam, and Heaven extended above us."

But the answer proffered suffices us no more.

The sincerity of Empedocles, in a much later and more enlightened day, is yet clearer. He believed himself rather a fallen divinity than a mere ephemeral creature of dust. Indeed, even so sane a modern mystic as Wordsworth has uttered, in his most ringing verse, his recollections of a diviner life. Many a confident theogony or cosmogony, more or less naïve, appears during the centuries between Hesiod and Heracleitos. The latter, whose conjectures really pierce higher and deeper into the impenetrable dark than all the rest, has uttered at last the fearless cry of disheartenment, almost in Tennyson's words, "Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers." —"Much learning makes not wise the soul."

Vide supra, p. 74.

Anaxagoras, a member of Pericles's circle, stript off from his calm statements all the radiant shapes of the popular mythology. These Empedocles had partially retained, naming his elements, Zeus, Hera, Hades, etc. Aristotle remarks, that Anaxagoras's recognition of Intelligence as the Prime Cause makes him seem a sober man among the intoxicated. Yet his theory of atoms, and kindred doctrines, tended toward arid materialism. His teachings were long well known in Athens, at least: "He says the sun is a stone, and the moon is earthen!" cries out Meletos against Socrates, who calmly replies: "Do you suppose you're accusing Anaxagoras? And do you think our citizens too ignorant

Metaphysics, I., 3.

Plato's Apology, 26 D.

of books to be aware that his writings are crammed with such tales ?"

It was under this very influence that the young Socrates had matured. Plato may well have heard from his living lips the complaint that Anaxagoras did but postulate Intelligence, then failed to explain how she (or he) moulded a universe. This is certain, that the real Socrates turned away in disgust from an astronomy, a chemistry, a natural science generally, which was but a series of vague guesses at what he accounted the unknowable : and strove to direct the entire attention of himself and his younger friends to ethics, to the practical duty of man in an environment which he can neither radically change nor adequately comprehend. In truth, in any age Socrates would probably have been a specialist in ethical sociology. The fields and woods appealed to him as little as to Samuel Johnson. The teeming imperial city, its streets, markets and gymnasia, were his laboratory. Even to-day he might care for no other Thinking-shop.

While Socrates disdained the natural science of his day. he hated, far more bitterly, the sophistical rhetoric so prevalent in law-court and market-place, which denied the very existence of an immutable moral law, and strove to sway principle to and fro with the varying breath of self-interest. We may fairly dismiss with a word, then, from any place among our sketches of the real man, the audacious libel of the Aristophanic "Clouds," which makes him the very type and master-spirit of these two forces, combated by him all his life !

Supra, p. 246.

Xenophon's "Memorabilia," to which his "Oiconomicos" and "Symposion" may be added as elaborated and detached supplements, meant to offer a truthful picture. But the prosaic Xenophon, with his imperfect sense of humor, somehow fails to set visibly before us the charm, the daimonic power, which Socrates certainly held over every type of

man, from the practical Criton, or dreaming Phaidon, to the mad Apollodoros or reckless Alkibiades. In Plato's "Apology," on the other hand, we feel that we have one of the earliest among many examples of a rhetorical skill, a masterly shaping art, more exquisite than Socrates ever dreamed. Yet the large, salient features, at least, of that picture also must have been truthfully drawn.

Socrates's efforts to work out a sound and practical body of ethical principles must have begun, in an esoteric circle at least, long before his eccentric admirer Chairephon plodded to Delphi with the strange question: "Is any man wiser than Socrates?" The latter would seem to have been known at Delphi itself as one who had accepted literally the golden text, "Know thyself," and already taught that "Life without self-examination is not livable at all." All the rest of his days he went about seeking a wiser than himself, only to discover that others shared his ignorance, and lacked his full realization thereof. His method was simplicity itself. He merely probed with questions for the ultimate bases of professed knowledge,—and found ignorance. Anyone, endowed like him with wit, ready speech, self-control, and heroic fearlessness, can still use the Socratic elenchic. At best, those of his fellow Athenians who were truly masters of one high or humble art more than offset that knowledge by the conceit of wisdom in every other direction. At last he has come to realize that the god was right; and meantime he has made all conservative men in Athens his enemies.

Apology, 21 A.

Apology, 38 A.

That he should have been actually put to death, even in an Athens brutalized by the thirty years' war and by the reign of terror, is still strange. But the prominence, among his disciples, of Alkibiades and Critias, the two deadliest foes of democracy, may have worked him fatal harm. Xenophon's plea, that their wickedness was restrained by



HERODOTOS AND THUKYDIDES.
Antique Bust in Naples Museum.



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him while they were his pupils, does not fully satisfy even us. Socrates believed that the Aristophanic play had had a lasting influence. That he had made numberless young men unsubmissive to authority, sceptical of traditional theology and morals, often rude in applying his methods of cross-examination, he would not wish to deny. Even his unsandalled feet and tattered cloak, his extraordinary ugliness of face and his brawny, stubby, unshapely figure, removed him from the sympathies of many fastidious gentlefolk. Lastly, his reliance on his "Daimonion" or Inner Voice may well have seemed to many a most dangerous type of atheism. All the great dominant creeds of Christendom have sent men to the rack, the gibbet, or the stake, for less startling heresies.

Yet all these influences, if we may believe Plato, would have failed, in all likelihood, to compass the sage's death, but for his own audacious demeanor at the crisis of the trial. Instead of the real alternative penalty which the law permitted him to set, he claimed as his due life-long public support, as a sort of civic class-leader for discussions on righteousness. These discussions, he repeated even then, could be stopped only by his death. The conclusion lies close at hand, that he on the whole preferred to set the martyr's seal to the sincerity of his life-work. This desire, too, may be easily paralleled.

His sole notable public act is mentioned in the Platonic "Apology." It should have made him friends only, and restrained the people from slaying him. Five years before, six successful generals had been brought to trial for a crime of omission. Popular clamor forced a decree condemning all together without a real hearing. One man in Athens was capable of refusing the mob its helpless prey. A series of chances made him by lot one of the five hundred senators of the year, gave his clan the presidency for that month, selected

Apology, 32 B.

him, again by lot, to preside that day over the tumultuous assembly. Their fury had to wait for another day and a more complaisant chairman.

Was Socrates sane? Perhaps no man is absolutely so: the revolutionist, the fanatic, the monomaniac, least of all. He was subject to fits of complete abstraction, in which he would stand musing twenty-four hours at a time. His utter neglect to provide support for his family seems due to an absolute incapacity to adjust himself to a conventional world. He and his were probably pensioners of Criton, doubtless without Socrates's full realization of the fact. His statement that his daimon often bade him pause, never urged him on, is doubtless his own acknowledgment of a will so impetuous, an energy so uncontrollable, that it needed from the higher powers often the curb, never the spur.

Mad or sane, he was the mightiest of all Hellenic teachers, perhaps we may venture to add, of all merely human teachers. Even on the walls of a modern class-room, no fitter text could shine in letters of gold than the words: which a Xenophon could not have composed, and must have remembered:

Xenophon, Memorab., i., vi., 14.

"The Treasures of the wise of old, which they left recorded in their scrolls, my friends and I unroll and con together, culling out whatever good we find, but accounting it the great gain if meantime we grow more dear one to another."

He founded the first true college of liberal thought. Curriculum, fees, edifices, degrees, were lacking. There was but one department. Even the precious scrolls must have been few, since Euripides was the first Greek to collect a goodly library. Nor were they conned so painfully as were the darker mysteries of the human mind. Yet where shall we find such brilliant results? Plato, alone, would justify any school. When Socrates denies that he

is a teacher, all modern education echoes his modest truthfulness. No man teaches, or can teach, another. We can but stimulate each other to discover and develop the divine powers within ourselves. Each man grows wise, if at all, of himself.

If anyone still asks, just what contributions did this man make to science, Aristotle credits him with two : the inductive method of reasoning, and the framing of general definitions. Surely that suffices, if it were indeed the sole result of a heroic life.

Metaphysics, xiii., 4.

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CHAPTER XXXVI

XENOPHON

A GREEK artist, a privileged and welcome guest everywhere, usually roved the world freely, in quest of instruction, or later of employment: but he was also usually a single-hearted devotee of the one craft wherein he attained mastery. It may be the first hint of decadence, when that devotion grows less intense, and more widely distracted. Xenophon is incapable of the poet's loftier inspiration or imaginative power. Nearly every other field of literature he traverses, with fair success at least: personal adventure, memoirs, history, romance, political pamphlets, sportsman's manuals, character sketches.

Tradition reports, six centuries later, through the gossiping lips of Diogenes Laertios, how Socrates waylaid the beautiful boy in a narrow lane, stopped him with levelled staff, and plied him with questions where this or that commodity was sold. Ready and practical ever, the youth replied with ease.

"But where can Beauty and Virtue be found?"

"Nay, that I know not."

"Come with me and learn."

He followed loyally, yet later fled, like a less rebellious Alkibiades, from the salutary restraints of the school. Toward Babylon, with visions of wealth, and power, and fame, far away from Athens and Socratic wisdom he fared. Not wholly in vain, for every year, to this day, the beginner in Attic Greek plods in his footprints. The "Anabasis" is an ideal book for spirited boys, written by one whose own

ideals and spirit retained always certain boyish limitations and charms. We may see in it a typical sketch of young manhood, eager and erring at the Parting of the Ways. On that terrible night, when the officers had been assassinated, the army was a disheartened mob, and the man of resource must promptly appear, he is thus introduced:

Anab., III., 1.

"There was in the army a certain Xenophon, an Athenian, who was neither general, captain nor private: but his old friend the general Proxenos had sent for him, with a promise to introduce him to Prince Cyrus, whom Proxenos declared he himself prized more than his native city."

This sentiment of a Theban for a despot, a boy, a barbarian, should have repelled the Athenian youth. Socrates, when consulted, had feared that Cyrus's friendship might well cost Xenophon the good-will of Athens, and, perhaps to gain time, sent his young friend to Delphi. Xenophon, his heart set on the adventure, had only asked Apollo to what gods he had better make his vows on the way, to win success and safe return. This may well have been one of the practical worldly questions, to which the priests made frank answer without form of divination. To a mild reproof Socrates added: "Since, however, you did put your question so, you must now do what the god bade."

So many incidents and ideas from the "Anabasis" are used again in the "Education of Cyrus"—a romance having little that is historical save the name of the elder Persian conqueror—that our faith in the autobiographical sketch itself is weakened. Furthermore, in still another work,

Hellen., III., 1, 2.

the "Hellenica" or History of My Time, we read: "The march and retreat of the ten thousand has been described by Themistogenes the Syracusan."

Whatever the solution of that puzzle, our "Anabasis" is

composed by someone who always marched in Xenophon's company, knew his thoughts and plans, shared even his dreams. Authentic it is, then. Its truthfulness is a more delicate question. Like the seven books of the Gallic War, it is, at least, what the chief actor, and for the most part the sole recorder, wishes the world to accept as true. The speeches, certainly, all the best ones being Xenophon's own, full of wisdom truly prophetic, must have been elaborated in after years. In the nature of things, the real harangues and altercations could have been neither recorded nor recollected.

The result is as a whole delightful. The adventure itself, and certain memorable statements on the unwieldy helplessness of Persia, pointed the way for Alexander seventy years later.

Much that was tragic, even fatal, sprang from that rash eastward excursion. His grave old master, certainly, the youth never faced again. The rash prince Cyrus, like Gustavus of Sweden, flung his precious life away in the moment of decisive victory. The death-scene immortalized, and freely idealized, in the Platonic "Phaidon," passed while Xenophon fought his slow way northward to the longed-for sea—the second home of Hellene as of Norseman—leading his horde of adventurers to fruitless battle against Kurdish mountaineers and Armenian savages. The Greek world to which they at last returned was crumbling fast into chaos again in Sparta's imperious but weak and greedy hands.

A remnant of the ten thousand enlisted for a campaign against their old treacherous foe the Persian Tissaphernes, now the young Cyrus's successor as governor of Lydia. Socrates's fears came true. Xenophon recrossed the Ægean at last with King Agesilaos, who was summoned home to save Sparta from destruction. Among the allied cities threatening her was democratic Athens. Agesilaos's

barren victory at Coroneia Xenophon apparently shared, fighting against his own city.

A traitor, then? The question is as hard as Pilate's. Partisan spirit ran high, as in mediæval Italy. Xenophon may have felt, like Dante, that his true city went into exile with his party, or even with himself alone. Death awaited both at the gate, unless he came back a victor in arms. Or we may say, as Isocrates would, that Hellas was his fatherland, Persia the natural enemy, victorious Agesilaos the fittest leader.

If he ever saw Athens again, it was in extreme old age. Twenty years at least, during which his books were chiefly composed, he passed under Spartan protection on a wooded tract in Elis, lovingly described in an excursus of the "Anabasis." Here, hunting, fishing, training dogs or horses, he lived a mildly strenuous life on the profits of plunder and blackmail in Asia.

With all these experiences and tastes is combined a flavor of Socratic ethics, a cautious conformity in ritual, with a reticence as to theology, often seen in canny folk who wish to be safe, in any case, both here and hereafter. Of mysticism he has no trace. For the heroic altruistic philosophy of Socrates he shows the respect of a worldly man who has no idea of living out its precepts.

Such is the author of the "Memorabilia," or Reminiscences of Socrates. That this book must be inadequate has already been made clear. It does appear to be an essentially truthful record, based on a good memory. As to the filling out of any gaps in his recollections, Xenophon would be, at best, no more conscientious than Thukydides. It is a commonplace, occasionally a tiresome Socrates who is here delineated: yet there are some fine dramatic dialogues, considerable humor, a few really lofty passages: all truly Socratic, as we believe.

Xenophon's standing as a historian is not high. Yet we

must be thankful for his "Hellenica," as the only contemporary account of an important period. He begins so suddenly with "And after that," so nearly where Thukydides stopped no less abruptly, that a page or two of the elder writer, or a brief sketch by Xenophon filling the gap, has probably been lost. The first section completes the Peloponnesian War, the second series of books carries us down to the fall of Epaminondas. The omissions, especially in this latter section, are so grave, the scale so uneven, the work in general so unsatisfying, that some have suspected it as at best an abridgement by a later hand. But it is more probably a work hastily completed in Xenophon's old age, possibly meant for a small private circle, and marred by excessive partisan feeling.

362 B.C.

The "Oiconomicos" is the pleasantest picture we have of Greek family life, where the wife has been caught young, duly moulded in character to her husband's taste, then given a very fair measure of responsibility and even some freedom. It looks like a typical sketch, slightly idealized. It seems to be Xenophon's invention. Socrates, who is supposed to report the whole, as a conversation with the contented husband, hardly appears. In Xenophon's "Symposion" Socrates is prominent, and speaks on the subject of Love. The guests are, however, chiefly entertained by dancers, flute-girls, in short by a "variety troupe." The utter inferiority of this sketch to Plato's great "Banquet" must strike every reader.

The "Apologia" of Socrates is by another and feebler hand. What report Xenophon had to offer on this theme is made in the last chapter of the "Memorabilia." The brief "Agesilaos" is rather an eulogy than a biographical sketch. The "Hieron" is neither, but merely a dialogue between the tyrant and the poet Simonides on the proper way to treat one's subjects. Of the three able political or

economic pamphlets, and the three interesting treatises on hunting-dogs and horsemanship, not all are considered Xenophontic. The "Athenian Constitution," especially, dates from about the year 424, and is our oldest piece of Attic prose.

Xenophon's long exile must be his excuse for some serious lapses from Attic prose usage. His pedestrian style, however, is more graceful, clear, and easy than any other. This is, of course, partly due to the distinctly prosaic limitations of his mind. He is an author whom we outgrow, or rather whose limitations we come to see clearly, without losing our love for him. Few worldly minded men have ever been so cultivated, so interesting, so faultless in speech.

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CHAPTER XXXVII

PLATO

As to Plato's long life we know little. He had every advantage of family, wealth, physical and mental equipment, and education. His brothers Adeimantos and Glaucon are attractively delineated in his most famous work, the "Republic," as fearless and wide-ranging philosophic thinkers. He shows perfect familiarity with the poets, though the ignoble theology of Homer, the insincerity of the drama, banished them both from his Dream City. At twenty he became devoted to Socrates. An aristocrat by breeding, the misconduct and violent end of his kinsmen and friends among the Thirty Tyrants left him no hope or desire for public life.

427-347 B.C.

Republic, 398 A.

404 B.C.

Absent from Socrates's execution through illness, he soon after left the city. We hear of him journeying to Megara, to Kyrene, perhaps to Egypt. His various visits in Sicily, and unfortunate attempts to influence for good the tyrants of Syracuse, are hardly to be disentangled. Perhaps it was the influence of the Pythagorean school in Italy that first attracted him to bold speculations in natural science, to metempsychosis, and other mystical beliefs remote indeed from Socrates's homely, rather prosaic "common sense." If he was really captured and sold into slavery, as tradition relates, he was certainly restored quickly to Athens.

Phaidon, 59 C. p. 215.

His school, in the sacred close of the hero Academos, a mile outside the ancient Dipylon gate, seems to have been instituted about the year 387 B.C. Here for forty years he walked and talked with the young men of Athens and visitors from all Hellas. Fees there can have been none, so withering and constant is his scorn for the mercenary alien Sophists. His jealousy of Isocrates, and others, whose schools were also successful, is most human.

That he died with pen in hand is at least typically true. The Laws and Critias are both in an unfinished condition. All his published works have come down to us. With them are transmitted a number of dialogues considered even by the ancient scholars as spurious, and a series of letters whose authenticity is at best dubious.

It is one of the best illustrations of Socrates's unique fascination and power, that he held in loyal subjection to his influence, during the last seven years of his life, the most daring, creative, poetic spirit of the next generation, or indeed of the later Hellenic world. More than that, Plato used, both orally and in all his writings, for over half a century thereafter, the dialectic method and deadly elenchic taught him in youth. He continued the master's life-long quest for general definitions, for the essential meaning and source of Beauty, Truth, Wisdom, and other lofty conceptions. The final goal of both philosophers was ethical. The whole duty and highest usefulness of man, to himself and his associates, alike they sought. In nearly every dialogue, with all the magnificent dramatic action, varied scenery, manifold characters, the central light still falls on that sturdy, squat figure, with satyr face and siren voice. It is Socrates still who overthrows illustrious opponents, puts pretence to silence, reaches whatever truth is attainable, or at least urges on to renewed effort, until all others flag and fall exhausted.

Cf. Symposion. p. 215.

SOCRATES AND PLATO.

On the whole, all these wonderful works seem to the present writer Platonic rather than Socratic. The real Socrates had turned his back on the childish guesswork which in his day posed as science: the genius of the Socratic dialogues sweeps the whole circle of the knowable, and flies higher than any other human utterance, except the Apocalypse and the "Commedia," toward the Unseen. There is not a single sustained myth in the "Memorabilia," save the tale of Heracles at the Parting of the Ways: and that, however edifying, appears to be cited essentially in the rather tawdry rhetoric of Prodicos himself. Plato, though he brings Zeus, Hades, Prometheus, and many another traditional name into his mythic illustrations, might almost have uttered Walter Savage Landor's rash boast, that he had never borrowed an idea or a phrase. Indeed, there is a quiet reminder in that direction in the "Phaidros:" "It is easy for you, O Socrates, to invent tales of Egypt, or of any lands you will."

Memorabilia, II., I., 21-33.

Phaidros, 275 B.

While Socrates appears to have argued as fairly as he could, Plato is not logical, just, nor tolerant. His opponent's case is not often given the strongest statement of which it is capable. Though wearisomely detailed and exhaustive at times, his dialectic is full of that most insidious fallacy, the ambiguous or undefined middle term. Moreover, the dialogue usually culminates in an imaginative myth, often frankly treated as pure inspiration, in which all pretence of painful proof is abandoned. These flights, and the dramatic setting, are to most readers far more precious than the inconclusive abstract reasoning. Sometimes we have long been wishing the poet would drop the elenchic and unfold his wings. But Socrates was hardly a poet at all.

Lastly, Socrates wrote nothing. Why Plato describes him, in the prison, as versifying the fables of Æsop, then current in prose, we cannot guess: but the phrase "you who never composed a line before" is decisive. That Plato wrote and published any even of the lesser "dialogues of inquiry" in his friend's lifetime, seems an improbable tradition. The surprise ascribed to the real Socrates over the words Plato attributed to him, like the similar anecdotes told of Gorgias and Phaidon, only illustrate the belief of antiquity, that Plato, like Aristophanes, had worked with a perfectly free hand.

Phaidon, 61 B.

Supra, p. 104.

Phaidon, 60 D.

Diog., III., 35.

Athenaios, 505 E.

The "Apology," then, is probably the oldest of our dialogues. In it, on account of the publicity and fame of the trial, Plato may well have endeavored, like Thukydides, to "give the general purport of what was actually said." But it is the most finished, artful, masterly plea ever addressed to a jury of future ages. Even supposing the real Socrates to have uttered a portion of these words, the present "Apology" is a labor of the loving year-long file.

Supra, p. 277.

The brief "Criton" is much simpler in structure, and teaches, in the most earnest fashion, the duty of submission to the penalties of the law, however unjust. Our own Abolitionists were often in a similar dilemma. Criton comes to Socrates's prison to announce his execution as close at hand, and makes a final plea to him to escape. Socrates's real preference for death is again clearly indicated.

In the delightful pair of dialogues called "Lysis" and "Charmides," also, Plato is still under real Socratic influence. The scene of each is a palaistra, or boys' gymnasium. In the one the attempt is made to reach an adequate definition and conception of Friendship, in the other of

Virtue. Charmides was a real Athenian, and uncle to Plato. These entirely realistic chats with beautiful youths are not so very remote, save in the sparkle of a loftier style, from, *e.g.*, the Xenophontic report of Socrates's talk with the ambitious but ignorant young Glaucon, who, by the way, was Plato's brother, or with Socrates's own sons, who find their mother's temper a trial.

Memorabilia, III., 6, and II., 2.

The conclusion barely reached, but not accepted, in the "Charmides," that virtue is knowledge, vice ignorance, is quite in the spirit of Socrates. On some such notion, indeed, our compulsory education at the public expense must be based. The attractive character given in this sketch to Charmides, who had perished fighting against the popular cause with the "Thirty Tyrants," is a proof of Plato's loyal courage. Still more so is the introduction of his uncle Critias, the cruel leader of the lost cause. Plato's pride of blood is as frank as Pindar's.

Supra, p. 304.

CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUES.

We must pass to the longer work, wherein more positive results are reached.

The "Protagoras" has been alluded to in speaking of Eupolis's comedy. In Callias's palatial house are entertained at one time the three famous sophists and their disciples. Hippias and Prodicos take only occasional and minor parts in the discussion, which ranges widely. Protagoras, on the other hand, is treated to the last with genuine respect. He contributes many of the best thoughts, including the new Promethean myth and the quotation from Simonides.

Supra, p. 241.

The main conclusion, more confidently stated and maintained than is usual in Plato, is that all the virtues, justice, temperance, wisdom, piety, courage, are essentially

alike, and the essence of all is knowledge. This is closely akin to the teaching of Emerson and many others, that sin is due to misapprehension, evil is misdirected impulse which can and eventually will be made good. That, even with full and constant understanding, the human will might be perverse, Plato does not appear to grant at all.

Though this metaphysical truth, attained by the laborious and sometimes wearisome dialectic method, is the main purpose of the Protagoras, yet we enjoy such an all-sided view of intellectual Athens at its best, every page is so alive with wit, poetry, clear insight into life, picturesque contrasts in character, all touched with the most exquisite Attic urbanity, that we feel we are present at a drama: or rather at a real social gathering of the best men ever assembled anywhere. This, the "Symposion," and the like, are our true and fully adequate consolation for the loss of the Middle and New Comedy.

To the other great sophist, Gorgias, and a group of his disciples, a special dialogue is devoted. It is too long by half, at least, and Socrates's reasoning is often in detail most sophistical. The tone is grim and vehement. Socrates's own death is prophesied, and seems to be weighing heavily on Plato's memory. Rhetoric is fiercely attacked, as "a craft that works persuasion, not instruction, concerning right and wrong." It is compared to fancy cookery, as productive of deception and mental dyspepsia. Certain passages make a close approach to the highest Christian ethics, urging, *e.g.*, that it is better to be the sufferer than the sinner, better to atone for sin than to go scot free.

Gorgias, p. 521 B.C.

P. 455 A.

P. 465 C.

P. 478 E., etc.

In the "Phaidros" the dialogue is between Socrates and his young friend, only, under a lofty plane-tree beside the rippling brook Ilissos. It is an attempt to substitute a true, well-reasoned science of style and construction for the

popular rhetoric. The subject-matter of the first two "speeches" analyzed is most unedifying to modern taste. Whether the one quoted as Lysias's was genuine is still debated. The third, however, is a splendid rhapsody of Socrates's, describing the chariot-course of the upper world from which we are fallen. Here occurs the most picturesque statement of the Platonic tripartite division of the soul, into baser passion, nobler impulse, and will. The last is figured as the charioteer, aided by the better steed to control his perverse mate.

The foundations of true rhetoric were indeed laid in this magnificent and intimately Athenian study. The best-known passage of all is the closing prayer of Socrates to the rustic powers that guard the spot:

Socrates: O dear Pan, and whatever other gods are here, grant me to grow beautiful within: that what outward possessions I have may be helpful to my inner powers. May I account the wise as rich. Of gold may I have so much as only the temperate men could bear and carry.

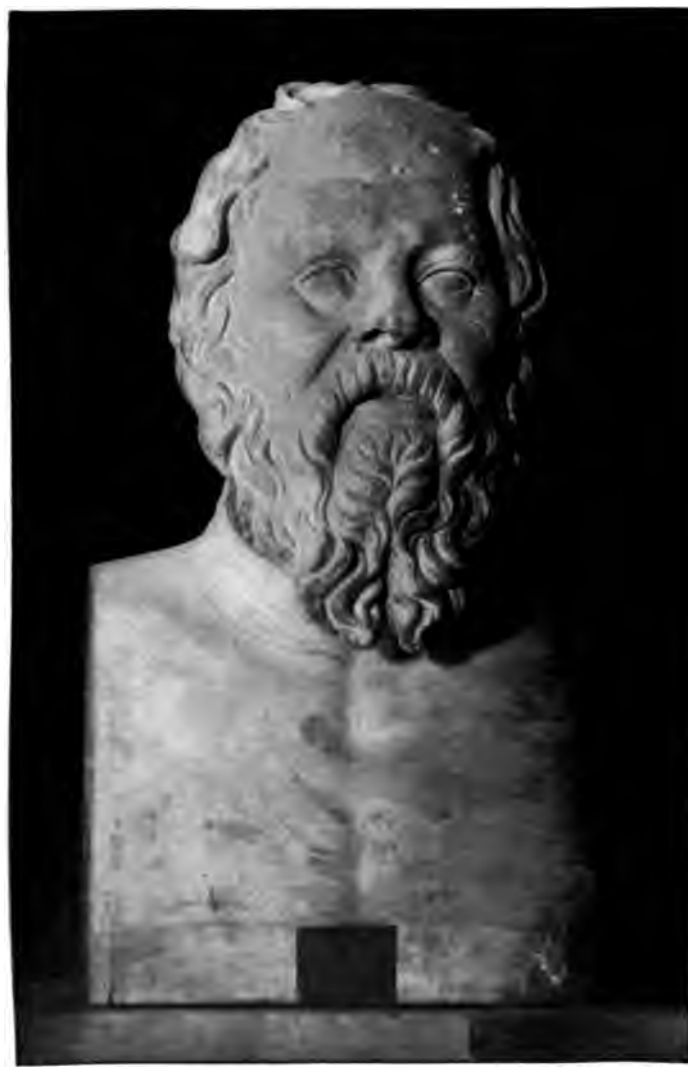
Do we need aught else, O Phaidros? For me at least this petition suffices.

Phaidros: Make that prayer for me also: for friends' goods are common.

Socrates: Let us go.

The "Cratylos" and the "Euthydemos" have for the most part only a curious interest for us. In the former the nature of language is discussed, and much space is devoted to etymologies, of a most unscientific and fanciful character. Indeed, the guesses of the classical age, in this field, are usually naïve. The "Euthydemos," again, contains a surprising collection of puns, absurd fallacies, and paradoxes. Isocrates, who was heartily admired in the "Phaidros," is here fiercely attacked, though not named. In general the rhetoricians and sophists are caricatured and ridiculed without mercy.

Euthyd., 304 D.



SOCRATES.

Antique Bust in the Capitoline Museum at Rome.



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SYMPOSION AND PHAIDON.

The next two dialogues require much fuller appreciation. The "Symposion" is in happier tone than any other. The banquet in question was given by Agathon, to celebrate his first tragic victory. When Socrates brings along a little brother of the barefoot guild, Aristodemos, the gracious host assures the intruder, perhaps truthfully, that he had sought him that day, in vain, to invite him. The other most notable guest is Aristophanes.

The flute-girl is soon bidden "go play to herself or the women" in the harem, while the men drink, not to excess under a tyrannical toastmaster, but at will, while they discourse in turn on the general subject of Eros: passionate love. A rather scornful rivalry with Xenophon's slighter sketch, or some common relation to a real occurrence, seems evident. The whole Attic scale of social morality and taste is fearlessly represented in the speeches.

Supra, p. 312.

Aristophanes does full justice to his reputation for wit and grotesque creativeness. He describes primeval men as double-faced, eight-limbed, rotund, and immensely powerful. The gods in terror cleft their own creations in twain, and now the halves of each divided creature, whether it was wholly male, female, or bisexual, forever seek and crave each other. There is a poetic truth under the grotesque image. "Eros," says Aristophanes, "is a name for the desire and pursuit of our complement."

Socrates, speaking last, lifts the discussion aloft into purest ether. Eros is indeed simply the craving for that we have not: in itself neither good nor bad. But our divine natures have unlimited and deathless desires. We crave children, to continue our brief earthly life. The children of the mind, all noble works that exist after we vanish, sate the same passion more fully. All earthly

beauty and excellence recalls faintly to the banished soul that perfect ideal of loveliness, here unattainable, to which the purified philosophic spirit shall return, after many weary reincarnations, as Plato often elsewhere repeats.

All this, Socrates declares, a woman taught him. Whether the wise Diotima of Mantineia be herself a pure fiction or no, we may well believe that her introduction here is in part one of Plato's protests against the dangerous limitation of social life, of liberal culture, of passionate personal devotion, to one sex.

At this point the company, though forewarned by knocking and shouting without, are surprised by the noisy invasion of the tipsy young Alkibiades, who is supported by the flute-girl and servants, but loquacious with wine, and heavily crowned with ivy and violets. He installs himself unbidden as master of the feast, and reproving their sobriety proposes that they drink in turn from the great wine-cooler. To this test Socrates calmly submits without visible effect. Diverted for the moment, and persuaded that he too should discourse in his turn, Alkibiades will only chant the praises of his beloved and dreaded master. Under all these conditions, we get a magnificent picture of Socrates as his most wilful acolyte saw him, with all restraints of reticence flung off. The by-play of coquetry and pretended jealousy between the two, meantime, is only intelligible in ancient Hellas.

"Before this man, alone, have I felt, what no one would suppose was in my nature, shame. I am conscious that I can-
Symposion, 216 B. not refute him : so I flee like a runaway slave. Often I would gladly not see him among the living. Yet if, again, that should come to pass, I well know that I should be distressed even more."

Clearly this truthful drunkard speaks for his whole people, that was to slay, in fatal delirium, its chief bene-

factor, and suffer remorse ever after. Of Socrates's moral purity and perfect self-control, his amazing physical endurance and heroism in battle or amid panic rout, we get fullest evidence from this youth, whose life he had saved, and for whose lawless soul's salvation he had striven no less bravely, albeit in vain.

Other revellers still arrived, the more moderate guests withdrew, our informant Aristodemos fell asleep. Long after, at cock-crow, he awakes to find all departed or soundly slumbering save Agathon, Aristophanes—and Socrates, who, sitting between them, while all three drink in turn from the great bowl, argues down the reluctant and exhausted pair of poets, insisting that the supreme master of either art must combine tragic and comic genius. Whether this be a prophecy of Shakespeare, of Menander, or only of Plato himself, we need not decide. As day breaks, both poets succumb to slumber. Socrates sauntering forth takes his morning bath, spends the day in his usual fashion, and goes home the second evening to make up his lost sleep.

That we can pass from this all-night revel to the long tranquil last day with Socrates among his disciples is the final proof of Plato's dramatic genius. That the day was really spent in peaceful conversation, that the hope of future reunion or continued existence was touched upon, we can hardly doubt. But the Socrates of this dialogue, even in the prelude, quotes and criticises, with the ease of a true scholar, an esoteric doctrine of the Pythagoreans. The curiously vivid statement that the Ideas, or Ideals, really exist in visible forms, in the remote, dimly remembered Home of souls, is made, and assumed as sufficiently proved: as "only what we have repeated over and over, both to-day and at other times." Each theory of earlier sages is mentioned, analyzed, refuted, with equal mastery.

Phaidon, 61 D, etc.

Phaidon, 100 B.



Pythagoras himself, in the person of his Theban disciples, Simmias and Kebes, sat humbly at Socrates's feet all that day. Milton is quite right. If we would refute the lonely materialism of Lucretius, and

> "unfold
> What worlds or what vast regions hold
> The immortal mind,"

we may indeed call up gladly the outward shape of Plato's master : but the spirit is

> "The spirit of Plato."

Even the twilight scene, so fondly reproduced by the modern painter's art, cannot be wholly true, we are told, to physical science. Whoever dies by hemlock must pass in spasms and agonies quite remote from this peaceful farewell.

DOGMATIC DIALOGUES.

A third class of works is clearly to be recognized, in which Plato, matured, grown more and more dogmatic, sets forth in large constructive forms his own settled convictions. Here there is often marked impatience and haste in the use of the dialectic method. Often Socrates lectures on and on, encouraged merely by varied forms of assent or purely formal inquiry. Thus Book III. of the "Republic" opens in the midst of a destructive analysis of Homer's ideas concerning the gods. But no one appears in the defence of the pan-Hellenic Bible! Adeimantos's responses, if read alone, grows ludicrous. "Yes"; "Clearly so"; "We do"; "True"; "Indeed it is." The puppet himself rebels gently :

Republic, 389 A. "*Socrates:* We must not sanction such language, according to your principles.
Adeimantos: If you like to call them mine, no doubt we must not."

The "Republic" is nominally a discussion on the exact nature of Justice. Since man the microcosm is essentially repeated in the macrocosm called a State, the ideal commonwealth is delineated, that we may see the same quality more clearly when there "writ large." The tripartite division of the human mind here reappears in the three classes of citizens: laborer, soldier, counsellor. Justice is eventually defined as a sort of harmony or balance among the three elements.

Whether this ideal state can ever be realized, Socrates himself seems doubtful: not, at any rate, until the "kings of earth become sages, or the sages are made kings." The chief value of the attempt is in the searching criticisms made upon existing forms of government, kingship, aristocracy, democracy, and their baser counterfeits, tyranny, plutocracy, ochlocracy.

But while the ethical purpose of this largest human institution, the State, is inspiringly set forth, some of the means proposed must seem to us unfit, even abhorrent. Most destructive is the practical dissolution of the family. It is actually proposed to make filial affection, or even the knowledge of one's parentage, impossible, that all such sentiment may be concentrated on the State as the common parent.

The same socialistic theory is naturally made to include abolition of private property also. It is an attempt to force upon a passive mass an ascetic ideal of laborious and simple living, while even the happier few must do their philosophic thinking along safe and deep-drawn lines. The myths, *i.e.*, the popular religion, must be carefully invented, and published only under strictest censorship, in the sole interest of stable government and submissiveness to authority.

This is a scholar's Paradise at best, and even that under a fanatical dictatorship. The Academeia itself in Plato's old age, the mediæval monastery, or its offspring the early

college, as at Oxford, with its celibates and priests alone in good standing, have made the nearest approach to realization of the dream.

This is Plato's masterpiece. With his Athens, present or past, he is profoundly dissatisfied: and we too, for very different reasons, would certainly refuse to accept that community, with ninety per cent. of slaves, with even its free women uneducated and secluded, a republic which held many other Greek cities as mere compulsory allies and tributaries, for our ideal. But his imagined state would satisfy our best thinkers, our noblest dreamers, still less. We must confess, in sadness, that the most brilliant ancient critic of social and political realities was successful only on the destructive side: and his visions, though deserving of closest attention, often even of reverent study, can never be our own. He was a doctrinaire, who took no adequate account of human nature and its past experience.

We may say, in this connection, that Plato in old age partially repudiated this political scheme. The "Laws," an essay even longer than the "Republic," yet not quite completed, restores the family and private property, though under detailed supervision of the state. In this work the poetic charm of earlier compositions, the dramatic setting, often even the form of dialogue, have vanished. Socrates does not appear at all. The Athenian stranger, who is the dominant interlocutor, hardly wears a mask over Plato's own features. With him are met only Kleinias, a Cretan, and Megillos, a Spartan. Plato's austere and aristocratic dislike for Ionian freedom and democracy, his preference for the sterner suppression of man under law in the Dorian states, remained to the last.

Many others of the forty-two dialogues demand more than a passing word. Even to reject confidently half a dozen as un-Platonic requires a very intimate knowledge

of his long and varied career. Yet we have at least mentioned those masterpieces which are best known and most influential in the literature of ancient and later times. Several of the important works of the third period, as the "Sophist" and "Politicos," discuss in the most detailed and prosaic fashion the psychological basis of cognition and science. These have far less literary quality than, *e.g.*, Professor James's lucid and illuminating studies.

Remotest from the real Socratic starting-point, most magnificent in its constructive audacity, is the Timaios, wherein is worked out more independently the cosmic picture sketched in the "myth" which closes the Republic. Timaios, the chief artificer in the discussion, is introduced as a disciple of Pythagoras. The confession of debt is unquestionable. Yet when the Demiurge shapes our universe, he has Plato's Ideas before him as his working patterns. The Critias, which was to follow, but remains a mere fragment, is of especial interest to us in Ultima Thule, as containing the earliest Greek account of the lost island Atlantis. The tale is traced by Plato to Solon, who received it from Egyptian priests at Sais.

"You Greeks are always children," said those same priests to Solon. There was truth in the charge. The fresh delight in life, the eagerness, the fickleness, the frank self-confession and naïve vanity of children, their impulsive cruelty and prompt remorse, their passionate love for color and form, their craving to imitate and create, are all striking Hellenic traits, in Attic as in earlier times.

But with Plato the race grows old. Our world itself had lost much of its primal charm. In the Republic the Homeric Achilles is sternly rebuked for loving earthly life better than the nether gloom. Plato himself seems at times, as in the Phaidros myth, to approach the Hebraic

view, that this existence is but a brief Purgatorial passage to a better world or to a place of grievous atonement for sin.

The best intellects of later days look backward with regret to this greater age. There are many philosophic scholars, but, with one possible exception, only minor poets at best, that still sing on into the deepening twilight. The largest messages of Hellas to us were uttered before she lost her freedom. However much the world gained through Alexander's conquests, our tale closes most fitly with Plato and Demosthenes. Our rapid sketch of the succeeding centuries will be little more than a catalogue.

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BOOK V

THE AFTER-TIME



	Political Events.		*Literary Events.*
B.C.			
336–323	Alexander the Great.		
335	Thebes destroyed by Alexander.		
334	Alexander invades Persia.		
332	Conquest of Asia Minor.		
	Conquest of Syria and Egypt. Foundation of Alexandria.		
331	Alexander in possession of Babylon.	B.C.	
330	Death of Darius. Conquest of the far East.	330	Orations of Aischines against Ctesiphon, Demosthenes on the Crown, and Lycurgos against Leocrates.
332	Conquest of Asia Minor.		Philemon began to exhibit comedies.
326	Alexander in India.		
324	Alexander's efforts to fuse Macedonians and Persians in one nation.	324	Deinarchos's and Hypereides's speeches against Demosthenes, who is exiled on a charge of peculation.
323	Alexander's death at Babylon.	323	Demosthenes recalled, and shares in the Lamian war.
323–2	Greece revolts. "Lamian war." Macedonians triumph at Crannon. Athens occupied by Macedonian garrison. Confusion in the Macedonian empire, and wars among the "Diadochoi."	322	Death of Demosthenes, and of Aristotle.
306	Royal title assumed by Ptolemaios in Egypt, and others.		

	Political Events.		*Literary Events.*
		B.C.	
		300	Ptolemaios founds the Mouseion and Library at Alexandria. Theocritos, Bion, Moschos, pastoral poets. Aratos, astronomer and didactic poet. Callimachos, scholar and poet. Apollonios Rhodios, epic poet.
B.C.			
280	Beginning of the Achaian league.		
251	Sikyon joins the league.		
243	Corinth and Megara join the league.		
234	Megalopolis, chief city of Arcadia, joins the league.		
211	The Aitolian league forms alliance with Rome.		
		210–190	*Plautus's comedies exhibited at Rome.*
188–146	Hostilities between Achaian league and Sparta, encouraged by Romans.		
168	Romans conquer Macedonia.		
167	One thousand leading Achaians taken as hostages to Rome.	167	Polybios goes to Rome among the hostages.
		166–161	*Terence's comedies appear in Rome.*
151	Return of three hundred Achaian survivors.		
146	Achaians at open war with Sparta, and hence with Rome. They are defeated, Corinth is destroyed, Greece becomes the Roman province "Achaia." Carthage falls in the same year.	146	Polybios present at the destruction of Carthage.
111–106	*War between Jugurtha and Rome.*		

Political Events.		*Literary Events.*	
		B.C.	
		95 (?)	Meleagros, poet, and collector of first Greek Anthology.
B.C.			
88–66	*War between Mithridates and Rome.*		
58–49	*Cæsar in Gaul.*		
48–44	*Cæsar's dictatorship.*		
43–31	*Rule of Octavian and Antony.*		*Virgil, Horace, Livy, Ovid, flourished under Augustus.*
31 B.C. to 14 A.D.	*Reign of Augustus.*		Dionysius, critic, under Augustus.
			Diodorus, historian, under Augustus.
			Strabo, geographer, under Augustus.
A.D.		A.D.	
14–37	*Reign of Tiberius.*	40	Philo, Jewish philosopher, flourished.
54–68	*Reign of Nero.*		
69–79	*Reign of Vespasian.*	*Circa* 80–100	flourished together *Quintilian, Juvenal, Martial, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny.*
70	*Titus takes Jerusalem.*	70–100	Josephus, Jewish historian, published his works in Greek, at Rome.
		40–115	Dion Chrysostom, Christian preacher.
		45–115	Plutarch, biographer and essayist.
81–96	*Reign of Domitian.*	50–120	Epictetos, philosopher.
98–117	*Reign of Trajan.*	95–175	Arrian, historian.
117–138	*Reign of Hadrian.* Athens largely rebuilt.	*Circa* 160	Lucian, romance and satirist.
138–161	*Reign of Antoninus Pius.*	130–175 (?)	Pausanias, the traveler.
161–180	*Reign of Marcus Aurelius.*		

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PHILOSOPHY

Alexandrian Age, circa 338–168 B.C.

THE age of slow decay, which begins with the loss of Greek freedom, has no definite terminus. It may naturally be divided into the Alexandrian and the Roman age. As Aristotle was the teacher of Philip's son, so Polybios, two centuries later, educated Scipio Æmilianus, son of Macedonia's conqueror Æmilius Paulus. The careers of these two Greeks are typical of the lasting influence exerted by Hellenic culture, even in its decadence, over the ruder races of victors.

The extant books of all the authors who have been thus far discussed, with the relatively meagre excerpts from lost works of the same periods, would make a modest library of a few score octavo volumes. They can be read through in a few assiduous years, though much in them must remain forever unintelligible, because they are mere fragments from a lost world. Living scholars who have repeatedly accomplished this feat could undoubtedly be named. The total mass of ancient Greek writings from the following centuries is many times greater.

ARISTOTLE

384-322 B.C.

Thus, to begin with the mighty career that stands, like a great arch, between the Attic period and the wider Hellenism of Alexandrian days, under the name of Aristotle alone we have a whole encyclopædia or system of knowledge, which few men living would claim to have mastered. Much of the writing attributed

to him must have been done by pupils or paid secretaries. So far as style is concerned, most of the Encyclopædia Britannica is far superior to almost any of these scrolls.

It might be hastily supposed that the matter is still more valueless, from the growth of scientific knowledge in later centuries. It is of course true, that the treatment of the Flora and Fauna, *e.g.*, in the Aristotelian "Natural History," often excites only our curious interest as to the mythic accounts, travellers' tales, or other sources from which too many of the descriptions are drawn. Certainly his data seems meagre indeed compared, *e.g.*, with Darwin's.

On the other hand, so important a science as logic has made little advance since that day. The "Ethics," "Politics," and other sections, are masterly in method, and must at least be reckoned with, among the great systems of constructive thought. The fragmentary "Poetics" is still quoted oftener than any other treatise on that art. Even though based on a gross misunderstanding of Aristotle, the tyrannical enforcement, by certain French critics and their disciples, of his supposed Three Unities, has so vitally affected both literature and criticism that they must be familiar to all. The unities of time and place are not laws at all, either in Aristotle or in the usage of fifth century tragedy. For the dramatists they were at most prevailing tendencies, enforced, apparently, by the lack of a drop curtain. Yet so famous a play as the "Eumenides" freely violates both "laws." Unity of plot is, of course, an essential, indeed the essential quality of any creation, from a lyric to a universe.

The "Constitution of Athens," recently discovered, was but a section of a great work which elucidated the constitutions of one hundred and fifty-eight states of Hellas and the barbarian world. This section was on the whole somewhat disappointing, but the entire work would be of inestimable value.

Though he was Plato's pupil in the Academy for two decades, and also spent his last years as head of his own famous Peripatetic school—in the Lykeion, formerly a gymnasium—yet Aristotle does not belong exclusively to Athens. His father was resident physician at the Macedonian court. The son, born at Stagira in Thrace, retained always an affection for his pupil, Alexander, the son of Philip.

Neither does he belong properly to literature, but is a mighty figure, perhaps the greatest of all, among encyclopædic scholars, systematic thinkers, natural philosophers. Far more successfully than Bacon did he take all knowledge for his province. Yet from Plato's magnificent visions of other worlds Aristotle reverts to something very like materialism, and agnosticism.

We are told that he wrote many popular treatises, even dialogues. These have all perished, and it is hard to believe that he ever made even the faintest approach to his master's style. Dante, who really knew him well through Latin versions, enthrones Aristotle as "Master of them that know." But he has no place among the dreamers of the dream divine of beauty.

Inferno, iv., 131.

THE SCHOOLS.

Theophrastos, a Lesbian, succeeded Aristotle as "scholarch" of the Lykeion. We have from him two botanical works, and a series of thirty-one brief typical character-sketches. The latter are believed to be drawn not so much from life as from Menander's comedies. In a prologue, possibly not genuine, the author mentions his own age as ninety-nine. The types, beginning with Irony and closing with Avarice, are all ignoble. We are again reminded how fast the creative force of Hellas, and especially of Athens, is failing.



PANATHENAIC PROCESSION.

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As Alexandria rises to the position of an intellectual metropolis, Athens comes to appear to us more like a quiet university town, while the schools of philosophy, which remain longest centred there, may answer to the various colleges of Oxford or Cambridge, with their distinct traditions and general resemblance.

Although the Academeia and Lykeion continued to flourish, a certain supremacy was attained by the Stoics, who take their name from the Stoa Poikilé, an open colonnade adorned with the famous paintings of Polygnotos. Here again alien blood is infused as Attic energy decays. Zeno of Cyprus, the founder, is succeeded by Cleanthes from Assos in Asia Minor, author of the "Hymn to Zeus," a calm, pure utterance of lofty morality in hexameter verse. The seven hundred and fifty books of his successor, Chrysippos, have perished.

The austere simplicity of their doctrines, their contemplative attitude toward life, their indifference to pain and all unavoidable ills, rendered the Stoics especially acceptable to Romans like the Catos, and made them the dominant, as it were the orthodox sect, as long as paganism continued. Seneca considered himself a Stoic, though his life accorded ill with their doctrines. The pure and earnest ethical teachings of Epictetos are preserved by his pupil Arrian, who indeed modelled his career carefully on that of Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates. Even the imperial philosopher Marcus Aurelius composed his "Meditations," in twelve books, in Greek.

Yet more to be deplored than Chrysippos's disappearance is the loss of Epicuros's writings. The tantalizing fragments, with the uncritical loquacity of Diogenes Laertios, the bewildered "biographer of the philosophers," give us no adequate idea of his teachings, and only glimpses of a tranquil, active, and helpful life. The Roman poet Lucretius is the greatest disciple of Epicuros.

That may remind and assure us, that the sensuous enjoyment, with which the master would bid us be content, was no ignoble sensuality. But the schools hardly contribute to living Greek literature any model of form.

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CHAPTER XXXIX

HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY

THIS is to us a most important group of later authors, because we must depend upon them so largely for our view of the classical age as a whole. Hence we deplore particularly the loss of the earliest work of large and general scope, Ephoros's "Universal History" in thirty books. It was brought down to the year 340 B.C., *i.e.*, practically to the close of free Hellenic life. From the pages of Diodoros, who used Ephoros freely, we judge that the latter helped himself with no less liberal hand from Herodotos. We cannot suppose that Ephoros had any great mass of real "sources," nor could he have used them critically. The statement that each book opened with a prologue, and closed like a completed essay, is a pleasant reminder how constant among Hellenes was the striving for simple artistic forms.

The plagiarism just imputed to Ephoros is a common trait in ancient authors. In this section, especially, the loss of early works and the unscrupulous use made of them by later compilers will often compel us to reach down far into Roman times. Cicero's extravagant statement long remains at least a half-truth: "Greek is read by nearly all nations, Latin is confined within the narrow boundaries (of Latium itself)": though Plutarch in turn speaks, two centuries later, of the Romans "whose language all men now use."

Two accounts of Alexander's campaigns, written by competent eye-witnesses, indeed both prominent as act-

ors in the heroic drama, Ptolemaios and Aristoboulos, came down to Arrian, who in the second century A.D. attained high civic and military honors under the Antonines. We rejoice that he returned to these sources, ignoring the semi-fabulous tradition of intervening centuries. We must hope he used them exhaustively and judiciously in composing his Anabasis. Yet we would greatly prefer, even while reading his most lucid and tasteful pages, to verify the details for ourselves.

So again, the subsidiary sciences to history, viz., geography, archæology, chronology, even epigraphy, appear to have had an early and remarkably competent representative in Philochoros. He devoted himself chiefly to Athens, whose surviving monuments and proud history make her still the natural centre of interest. But of his Attic history in seventeen books, collection of Attic inscriptions, *catalogues raisonnés* of archons and Olympiads, etc., mere bits survive. Even the later compiler Istros avowed his indebtedness. Possibly his "Collection of Writings on Attica" was a sort of variorum edition of all the earlier treatises. His contemporary Polemon, fortunate in his very birthplace, a village on the Trojan plain, was no less at home in Athens, Delphi, Sikyon, Sparta. He was the true representative "Periegete." But his learned special essays also have perished.

† 261 B.C.

2d Century B.C.

PAUSANIAS.

Our first and only general guide-book for Hellas is the composition of a certain Pausanias, not earlier than the second century A.D. That he really made a general tour through Greece is to be conceded. Yet the important monuments left unmentioned by him, and still more the graphic accounts of others not to be seen *in situ* at his day, make it certain that he relied, chiefly, not upon his own

notes of travel, but upon some of the authorities just mentioned, whose names, however, he studiously suppressed.

Slipshod as his normal style is, Pausanias apparently makes some sentences more obscure than his wont, expressly to conceal his own doubt or ignorance. In general it is difficult to feel toward him any emotion akin to gratitude. Yet, in the absence of his betters, Pausanias has a value and importance not much below that of Herodotos. Every important land of the Hellenic main is described in detail, and that, too, at a time when most of the temples, statues, even paintings, of the best periods were essentially intact.

A single illustration must suffice. When the great Hermes, a masterpiece of Praxiteles, was recovered, all but intact, from the drifted sands of Olympia, the German archæologists were working from hour to hour with Pausanias in hand, and knew they were within a few feet of the spot where their boldest hope was to find a pedestal, with an inscription containing the master's name. So it has been, or will be, in many other fruitful excavations, notably at Delphi, which has just been uncovered under French surveillance.

POLYBIOS.

The life of free cities in Hellas was not absolutely destroyed by the Macedonian conquest. While the older centres slowly decayed, there was a remarkable development in some more backward clans. A very interesting early form of federation is the Achaian league, originating in the twelve kindred cities south of the Corinthian Gulf. In the third century before Christ it included many other cities, among them Sikyon, Corinth, Megalopolis, and took the lead in a last effort for Hellenic freedom. Involved in the great struggle between Rome and Macedonia, the Greeks lost their independent status, and a thousand leading citizens were transported to Rome as hostages in 167 B.C. Seventeen years later the three hundred survivors, mostly

aged and no longer important, were rather contemptuously allowed to return. By far the most notable of these was the historian Polybios, from Megalopolis, son of Lycortas who had been chief general of the league.

In Rome Polybios was always an honored member of the most brilliant social circle, which centred about his former pupil Scipio Æmilianus, included the young poet Terence, and in general the most liberal-minded of men. Polybios saw that the political absorption of the other races into the Roman Empire was inevitable. He believed it to be also beneficent.

His history of the epoch that begins with the Hannibalic war and ends in the simultaneous fall of Corinth and Carthage was conceived in a large cosmopolitan spirit. Lacking the reticence, the dignity, the condensed force, of Thukydides, he perhaps more than equals him in instructiveness for modern men, since from the vantage of wide personal experience he viewed an incomparably larger and swift-changing scene. He himself beheld Macedonia, Syria, Carthage, Achaia pass from powerful free states into provinces of the Roman Empire. Only the first five books remain to us entire, though very large fragments of the later portions are also preserved.

219 B.C.
146 B.C.

Polybios's own life and character have a pathetic interest. Rarely has the problem of patriotic duty presented itself to a man in more difficult form: but Polybios held the affections of both races, even when he came to Greece, famous, wealthy, influential, in the conqueror's train, to mitigate the humiliation and suffering of his own people.

AUGUSTAN AUTHORS.

As to the "Universal History" of Diodoros, written in the Augustan age, we can only say that he appears to have copied his superiors, like Ephoros, with diligence, in

a monotonous annalistic fashion. Even in the fragmentary shape in which we have it, this work is for many periods our chief or sole dependence. No one peruses it for admiration of the man or love of his style.

His contemporary Dionysios of Halicarnassos, the famous critic, also wrote a history of Rome. As the name "Roman Archæology" may imply, he pays much attention to the origin of institutions. He is hopelessly hampered by a perverted ideal. He writes history as a rhetorical exercise: and even his rhetoric is to us distasteful.

His critical essays, notably those on Thukydides, Demosthenes, Plato, are highly instructive. Yet here again we must quarrel with his main thesis. He regards style, rhetoric, as a supreme purpose in itself, while to us it is, or should be, merely the most natural and fit expression for the character of an author wholly in sympathy with his theme and altogether absorbed by it. We always realize that Dionysios is as self-conscious as Isocrates. Demosthenes, or Plato, mastering us from the first word, never leaves us breathing-space for cold analysis of his method.

In this same digression we may mention the best by far of all ancient Greek books upon style, the treatise "On the Sublime," sometimes ascribed to a Longinus. The author is unknown, but internal evidence assigns it to the same Augustan period. It is even now full of instruction, and happy illustration for the best canons of good taste.

Still in the same age appeared Strabo's geography, a complete survey of the civilized world, with much historical and legendary lore. Indeed, the book is deliberately based on the Homeric poems, which he considers the most unerring as well as the most ancient of sources. Strabo writes agreeably, and tells an anecdote cleverly.

In the first century of our era Josephus, a Jew, from the royal stock of the Maccabees, wrote in his own language, translated, with some help, into Greek, and published at

Rome, his histories of his own people. These works, undertaken at Vespasian's desire, are striking examples of international scholarship, or of the cosmopolitan leadership now fully centred in Rome. As a prisoner in Titus's camp Josephus had seen the fall of the holy city, in whose defence he had previously been the commander-in-chief. Another learned Hebrew of the same century, Philo, made the attempt to reconcile the teachings of the Old Testament, allegorically interpreted, with the most mystical doctrines of Plato and his followers.

PLUTARCH.

By far the most familiar and lovable among all the later historical writers is Plutarch. He sprang from a well-to-do family in the ancient and famous Bœotian village of Chæronea. He was a frequent visitor in Rome, a favorite of both Trajan and Hadrian. But he lived by choice in the peaceful seclusion of his native village. With his own four sons he educated many other youthful wards in what was more like a large and loving family than a school. His priestly functions add a patriarchal touch to the picture.

The origin of his essays, as informal talks in this circle, accounts most excellently for their unique and abiding charm. The fierce passions of Polybios's day had long since burned themselves out. To set a Greek hero or statesman beside a Roman, and draw a parallel between the two lives, was a natural treatment of what Plutarch, like ourselves, already regarded as ancient history. In the case of Theseus and Romulus, Alkibiades and Coriolanus, Alexander and Julius Cæsar, or Demosthenes and Cicero, this method has striking advantages. Among the twenty-three such pairs, some are naturally not so well mated.

Plutarch evidently spent an abundant leisure in a well-stocked library, to only a small selection from which we ourselves can ever have access. He was tolerably careful,

if we can fairly judge, in the use of his authorities, so far as dates and large historical events are concerned. Like Herodotos, however, he was much more interested in personal incidents, conversations, epigrammatic remarks. His unique power, in which he has perhaps never had a dangerous rival or even a fully successful imitator, was his ability to use all these details, like a great master of mosaic, in setting forth the graphic salient outlines of a human character. The unity of a great career like Solon's or Demosthenes's he sees less clearly, or reveals less powerfully, perhaps because his own secluded life, or the limited experience of his youthful auditors, made this attempt more arduous or less fruitful.

Under the vague but fitting title of "Moralia" we possess eighty-three essays, not all really the work of Plutarch, but bound together in some degree by their sane and ethical quality. They are not easily classified. Such titles as Brotherly Love, Marriage Precepts, On Affection for Offspring, perhaps form a natural starting-point. The schoolmaster is represented by "How the young should hear poetry," and similar studies. There are many real sermons, whether hortatory, as "How to make our enemies useful," or exegetical, *e.g.*, "On the delay in the punishment of the wicked." The essay "On music" is the best we have from antiquity. He knew Delphi thoroughly, and discoursed largely both on the history of the oracle and topography of the shrine. His political papers are philosophic and humane. The "Symposiaca" in nine books a section of the "Moralia," is a small cyclopædia of recondite knowledge, from the number of the Muses to the art of grafting. If the diatribe on the "Malignity of Herodotos" be Plutarch's, it illustrates curiously the lasting power of local pride and prejudice: for the main grievance there set forth is, that the historian, favoring and doubtless believing his Athenian hosts, had slandered the Boeotians.

It would be hard to imagine a more fruitful life. Greece was all but depopulated. Hardly a shadow of her great past remained. Her language itself seemed doomed to speedy extinction. Even a philosopher might well despair of gaining fame or winning a permanent hearing. Possibly this contented rustic priest and village school-master did not really look for much more return than the love of his own quiet circle. Yet it is doubtful if any writer, since the Phœnician letters came to early Ionia, has influenced so delightfully, so constantly, so helpfully, the youth of all later generations and civilized races. No biographer, perhaps no general essayist, can wholly escape his genial influence.

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CHAPTER XL

ROMANCE

THE most striking lack felt by us in Greek literature is prose fiction, particularly the long-sustained romance or novel. Yet in English letters also it appears relatively late: not until the eighteenth century. In Greece nearly all artistic uses of myth or legend were long in metrical form: epic, ode, or drama. The prosy and didactic "Cyropaideia" of Xenophon is the first romance, but it does not approach the "Anabasis" in interest.

Supra, p. 309

The Socratic ethic certainly has no influence over the later Greek romances. They undertake frankly to amuse. The marvels of all lands, and of Noman's Land, are freely exploited. Of character-study there is little. Sometimes a rather conventional and modern pair of lovers are carried through numberless hair-breadth escapes to a happy finale. Heliodoros's "Theagenes and Charicleia" is a fair type of many others. Boccaccio has better tales, and worse. Neither the Greek nor the Italian author is noted for strenuous moral purpose, reticence, or dignity.

One really beautiful idyll stands quite apart: the rustic Lesbian tale of the children Daphnis and Chloe. A few leaves must be torn out of any school edition: but the general effect is a happy one of peace, love, comradeship, and innocent youth. The syntax and style though not pure Attic, of course, are suited to the simple, natural subject.

Cf. supra, p. 110

LUCIAN

Lucian or Lukianos, like most writers of marked originality, resists classification. In the first place, he is a very remarkable scholar. Classic Greek was almost as truly an ancient speech then as now. By year-long absorption of the best authors, from Homer to Plato and beyond, he created for himself a style, a mosaic in its manifold details, not true in numberless respects to Attic prose usage, yet racy, clear, neither ignoble nor barbarous, wonderfully suited to his audacious, sardonic yet most cultivated wit.

125-200 A.D.?

His power of vivid original description of the marvellous and impossible makes his "True Story" the greatest tale of adventurous and unearthly travel ever devised. It would have made Poe despair, if he had known it. Perhaps the supreme touch is when, on the personally conducted tour through Hell, he finds good old Herodotos stalled with the real prince of liars, Ktesias, and enduring eternal torture for mendacity. "And as I beheld them, bright were my hopes for the hereafter; for I was conscious that I never told a lie!" This masterpiece alone will excuse the inclusion of Lucian here as a Romancer. "Lucius, or the Ass," if that tale of transformation be the original for Apuleius and for all the later versions, is only less engrossing and realistic in its impossibility. Charon conducted by Hermes through the upper world is more clearly satirical in its central purpose, yet genial still.

Much even in the delicious "True Story" is clearly a satire upon Homer, Plato, indeed on all the most earnest hopes, dreams, and beliefs, of his race. Ever more pervasive, bitter, corroding his cynicism grows. His old age must have been as forlorn as Swift's. Philosophy, myth, life itself, crumbles under his touch. At last the grinning skulls of the beautiful and wise of past ages seem to

be all he can distinguish, even in the pale light of Elysium itself. He makes us realize that paganism is dying indeed, and hideous in decay.

This is an author whom all mature students of rhetoric, of literature, or of life, should know, and may perhaps safely enjoy as a pastime, a spice, even as a corrective for dreamy credulity or excessive idealism: provided they never really pass under his cynical destructive influence. What he jeers out of existence, doubtless, deserved no better fate. But the spirit of the cynic himself is only too easily contagious.

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For Lucian there are partial versions in the Bohn Library, by Irwin (Methuen, London) and various others. The "True Story," with some necessary omissions, is capitally rendered in a little book for boys by A. J. Church (Scribner) under the title "A Traveller's True Tale." There is a remarkably good essay on Lucian in Professor Gildersleeve's volume of "Essays and Studies."



CHAPTER XLI

POETRY

If poetry is indeed a response to the elemental needs of all living men, if the child, the lover, the artist, incarnate in every human being, must sometimes wake to that need, then we may expect it to be not only the first flower to spring up by the hut and warpath of the savage, but also to find it, clinging and blooming still, upon the crumbling ruins of historic epochs, empires, and beliefs. Especially should this be true of the briefer lyric, which gives utterance to the common instincts of humanity. So to poetry our long curve inevitable returns at the close.

In the third century before Christ lived the last group of Greek poets whose names are in any degree famous or familiar. It is a pity their genius was not greater, for literary artists were perhaps never before or since so eagerly sought, or so liberally encouraged, as under the earlier Ptolemies, from the day when the first of the name founded the Museum and Library at Alexandria. These poets are by no means generally read, nor are they likely to grow more popular. Indeed scholarship, royal bounty, leisure, and each other's companionship have never bred great poets. Yet the quiet, luxurious home of culture, set in the midst of the bustling world-city of nigh a million souls, has its peculiar charm.

Cf. supra, p. 300

The most purely didactic of all these versifiers is Aratos, who in 1154 smooth hexameters, closely imitative of the old epic dialect, describes the constellations, the myths attached to them, and the weather signs. This work, the

"Phainomena," was composed at Pella, for his patron, King Antigonos of Macedonia, and has had a surprising number of editors, scholiasts, translators, among the latter the orator Cicero.

A much more sustained and ambitious Homeric echo is the Argonautica of Apollonios "the Rhodian." In nearly five thousand hexameters he describes the whole voyage of Argo, with many marvellous episodes and adventures, dear to the taste of his age. The third of the four books, better concentrated upon the incidents in Colchis itself, is by far the strongest. Especially powerful is the struggle between love and duty, in Medea's heart. Indeed this is the prototype of all such studies, from Virgil's Dido down to our own day, and perhaps never was excelled. The metre and dialect of Homer are quite successfully imitated. The subject was an unhackneyed one, and though somewhat lacking in unified interest, the poem can be read with enjoyment and profit. It has been extravagantly praised, and as mercilessly ridiculed, from Callimachos to Andrew Lang.

We cannot bitterly deplore the loss of Apollonios's half-dozen other epics, chiefly on the founders' myths of various Egyptian and Rhodian cities. Though humiliated, and practically exiled to Rhodes, in youth, by the jealous Callimachos, the poet died in honor and luxury, at the head of the great Library.

Far more recondite in his poetic and mythic lore was Callimachos, from Dorian Kyrene. His position as chief librarian in Alexandria under the second and third Ptolemies gave him leisure to fill eight hundred scrolls, or "books," of his own. But even his mighty catalogue of all eminent authors and their works, in one hundred and twenty books, is forgotten.

Besides sixty-four brief epigrams of his in the Anthology, only six "hymns" have come down to us, united with the

Homeric and Orphic poems of the same generic name. Five are in the hexameter metre, one in the elegiac couplet. The first four are also in the epic dialect, the two last in his native Doric. These are in large measure courtly poetry, somewhat as the great elder lyrists like Pindar and Simonides glorified the festivals and praised the exploits of Thessalian or Sicilian tyrants. But the old spontaneity and self-confidence are replaced by far-sought lore, personal and political allusions, flattery of his master, and elaborate "conceits." The readers of Callimachos are few, and ill rewarded for their laborious task, unless they be compilers of learned mythologies. Yet his skill is masterful. An epitaph may sufficiently illustrate this skill, as well as the scornful later disbelief in Pythagorean mysticism. The three elegiac couplets are a dialogue between the reader, the tombstone, and the departed.

"Charidos under thee lieth indeed?"—"If Arimmos'
Son, the Kyrenian, thou meanest, he under me lies."
—"Charidos! What of the region below?"—"Deep dark!"—
"Resurrection?"
—"Lies!"—"And Pluto?"—"A myth! Utterly perished are we.
"This my tale is true: yet if thou a Samian's sweeter
"Findest, then a big ox am I in Hades' domain."

We can hardly expect the hymns of so cynical a materialist to be vitalizing. Still less inspired is Isyllos, and later authors of pæans, etc., found carved on stone in recent years at Epidauros and Delphi. In the latter case we also have the Greek music to which the text was set.

Another very recent discovery is the Mimes of Herondas, from a papyrus roll found in Egypt. These seven poems, by their Ionic dialect and the limping iambic metre, recall the earlier style of Hipponax: but though the scenes are from low life and occasionally vulgar, they have not his



HEAD OF HERMES.

From Statue by Praxiteles, in the Museum at Olympia.



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bitter cynical tone. Rather are they cheerful and vivid *genre* pictures, apparently quite true to a commonplace reality, not very remote from Plautus's world. But we pass gladly to the one creative genius of the third century before Christ.

THEOCRITOS.

Curiously little is known as to Theocritos's life. His birthplace, even his name, was disputed. Among his poems are flattering and courtly appeals to the second Ptolemy, and also to a third-century Hieron of Syracuse. One of his most vivid and dramatic sketches sets before us two frivolous and loquacious dames of Alexandria, who go to attend the splendid festal rites of Adonis in the palace of Ptolemaios Philadelphos.

But perhaps the poet was so fortunate as to displease his imperial patrons. Indeed, the simpler pastoral verse, which has found such numberless imitators from Virgil and Tasso down, apparently sprang out of disgust and reaction against the wearisome luxury and splendor of that age. Whether himself a Syracusan born or not, this poet will always live for modern men in the chat of his herdsmen, shepherds, and rustic maids, in the Dorian dialect of the sunny, wave-girt Sicilian island.

Though far more sincere, consistent, and enjoyable than Virgil's conventional and political Bucolics, yet Theocritos's poems also are elaborated works of art. These are not mere rude fishermen, rustic pipers, clowns of any sort, but idealized figures, carven in noble and lasting material. Even the background, though full of real golden sunshine, is touched in with the hand of an exquisite artist. The consciousness of a haughty half-forgotten Greek past heightens the simplicity of these contests for a wooden bowl or yearling kid. Ancient mythic wealth flashes forth

amid the homeliest details. And yet, as the poet himself says of the aged mariner carved on the ivy-wood cup :

"The old boy, done to a marvel,
Staggers and sweats at his task—just like a fisherman hauling;
Looking upon it you'd swear that the work was alive and no picture:
So do the veins knot up and swell in his neck and his shoulders,
For, though he's wrinkled and gray, there's stuff yet left in the ancient."

—EDWIN ARNOLD.

The broken-hearted girl of the second idyl, and her fierce incantations, approach closer to realism, and certainly the local color is true Sicilian. Still, even this is art, not nature. Indeed, Theocritos reveals nothing more delicately than the absorption of the creator in his work. So, while the fox watches to steal the luncheon of the lad who should guard the vineyard,

"He, absorbed, a cage for locusts weaves,
Joining together reeds and stalks and leaves;
He cares not for his wallet, nor the grapes,
So much he loves the plaited work he shapes."

The two lesser pastoral poets, Bion and Moschos, are both more plaintive, and more artificial, than their master. Yet they have strains of entrancing sweetness, reminding us in some faint fashion of the genius, and also of the early death, which was Keats's portion, and which we somehow ascribe easily to the lyric singer.

If Bion had

"The heart of a man and passion of man thereto,"

yet did he, even as his youthful Achilles,

"Put on women's ways,
And a bloom on a cheek of snow,"

nor ever fully woke, like him, to learn that

"Beauty is women's glory, strength for men."

So, mute as his own Adonis the singer lies, and

"All else has perished in his death,
Yea, every flower is faded."

There is more courage in Moschos's yet briefer song. Even his Eros himself, plodding for once after the plough, glances skyward with a word of daimonic audacity:

"Father Zeus, to my harvest thou gracious must be,
Lest I yoke for my ploughing that bull that Europa once rode o'er the sea!"

Yet we hear, as a final note, the elegy of short-lived Moschos for young Bion dead, and turn gently away from a sorrow not our own.

"Wail, I would hear you wail, ye woodland dells."

THE ANTHOLOGY.

Though genius may always be an isolated miracle, taste, finish, sense of form at least, can be acquired, may even be almost the common property of an entire people. We have seen how clever echoes of Anacreon were produced in many following centuries, as *stornelli* still spring up in every Tuscan dale. Especially rigid in structure, limited in extent, somewhat resembling indeed in both these respects the modern sonnet, the "epigram" was at least as old as Simonides, while its last Hellenic revival under Justinian was nearer to Chaucer than to the memories of Thermopylai and Plataia.

The later use of the word *epigramma* is not easy to define. The elegiac metre, the limitation to a half-dozen

lines, are usual, not essential. Actual use as an inscription is the frequent exception, not the rule. The single effective point, or sting, left in the memory of the reader, is more nearly the soul of the epigram. It is, however, not so often a music-winged song to reach the heart through the ear, but the more modern appeal to a reading public, present or future, remote indeed from the quivering cry of Sappho's soul. Simonides himself is comparatively cold, consciously artistic, in truth a late rather than an early poet in his tone and spirit. The most famous contributor to our Anthology, the first collector of other men's epigrams, was Meleagros, who lived so late as the first century before Christ, yet was a true poet of half-Oriental feeling, and of languorous passion. His introductory poem to his lost collection characterizes happily, in terms that are indeed *flowery*, each of the other forty-seven poets whose verse he culls, from "the thorn-blossom of Archilochos from a tangled brake" down to "the bean-flowers of Phanias." This is literary criticism, but of no prosaic sort.

We now possess, from diverse sources, nearly six thousand Greek epigrams of all ages. To this number the inscribed stones unearthed at each historic site in Hellas make additions almost every year. Evidently no tolerable illustration of such wealth is possible, and indeed the elegiac metre is itself an all but hopeless barrier in our curt monosyllabic speech. A few of these fugitive verses have already been used on earlier pages. There is no phase of private or public life on which they fail to throw a candle's beam.

Commonest of all, naturally, perhaps the fairest test for the artistic instincts of a whole people, are epitaphs. The grave of the unknown is thus marked:

> "Ask not, oh sailor, whose this tomb may be:
> —But win thou happier fortune on the sea."

Even the cenotaph upon the beach has its verse:

"Not dust, nor stone's light weight, but every wave
Thou gazest on is Erasippos' grave.
He perished with his vessel: somewhere rot
His bones: yet only sea-gulls know the spot."

For one lighter strain we may attempt to mimic the elegiac rhythm.

"Sweet in summer is snow for the thirsty to drink: for the sailor
After the winter is past, sweet is the garland of spring:
Sweetest of all, when two underneath one mantle are sheltered,
While by the twain at once told is the story of love."

Still briefer, yet a masterpiece, is this:

"Hail, oh Lucifer, herald of day: and quickly returning
Bring thou, as Vesper, to me her thou hast hurried away."

But we can only pause to draw one or two fleeting chords from this harp of a thousand strings. Perhaps we may fittingly close with an epigram of the third century before Christ. We can hear it as a warning, how vainly we would recall the departed soul of Hellenic song. Rather should we seek, in the home-fields of Hesperia, the secret which the Greek race came nearest to discovering: how to idealize all the passing phases of life in the abiding beauty of art.

"Keep off, keep off thy hand, O husbandman,
Nor thro' this grave's calm dust thy ploughshare drive.
These very sods have once been mourned upon,
And on such ground no crop will ever thrive,
Nor corn spring up with green and feathery ears,
From earth that has been watered by such tears."

Translation of Alma Strettell.

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See also Jane M. Sedgwick's "Sicilian Idyls" (Copeland & Day), Fitzgerald (with the Hippolytos, *vide supra*, p. 235), Leigh Hunt's "Moschus' Lament for Bion," Mrs. Browning's "Bion's Lament for Adonis," Matthew Arnold's version of Theocritos's Idyl XV. in his "Essays in Criticism," etc., etc.

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EPILOGUE

A CERTAIN unity we have felt in this manifold and arduous theme, and tried, not too obtrusively it is hoped, to indicate it. Two threads run unbroken through nearly the whole story.

One is, of course, the imperishable influence of "Homer." Herein are included many forces, more or less akin: the charm of the old myths, the belief in a more heroic past, the especial fondness for the tale of Troy or of Helen, the power of the eldest poetic dialect over the form of every later composition, even the sway of the dactylic rhythm itself, parent of all others.

But again, in epic, and no less clearly in the best choral lyric, we feel the unceasing effort, the craving of the artist, to set a picture of human life visibly before us. At last, in Aischylos, the dialogue and scenic background are added to action, costume, music. All are perfectly fused in Sophocles's masterpieces. With the possible exception of our grand opera, the classic drama is the most complex, and the most human, of the fine arts. Living man is its centre, speech its chief organ, yet architecture supplies the frame, sculpture teaches the grouping and the poise, the lights and colors tax the painter's genius, and while movement and utterance make the scene indeed alive, music lifts the whole heavenward. Man, at least the noble, gifted, ever youthful Hellenic man, is adequately, though always ideally, portrayed in the Oidipus Coloneus and the Antigone. Perhaps an Alkestis or Hippolytos should stand beside them. Toward such a climax all earlier effort now seems to have moved.

After this supreme success must come an anticlimax. The life of a nation, as of a man, is like the curving path of a projectile, falling more directly than it rose.

Comedy is but a parody of life and of its serious expression. The early historian uses the frame of dramatic form to command our calmer, colder contemplation of what has been, not of what may be attained. The orator employs the noble style and the fervor of the poet to sway us toward practical, momentary, perhaps even unwise decision and action. Both should aim at artistic form, but purposes less ideal dominate their work. The philosopher's task is analytical and reflective, not constructive. In Plato to be sure, by a happy chance, a poet also was incarnated: but Aristotle's encyclopædic learning and wisdom is hardly pure literature at all.

On the downward path are still oases of brightest green. Theocritos, though he has little of the seer or dreamer, we hardly consent to call a decadent in any degree: but the melancholy of Bion and Moschos, the languorous wealth of Meleagros's fancy, indicate the swift decline. Though Plutarch turns his face backward in pensive regret, his gallery of heroes has educated many no less sturdy leaders of younger races. Lucian, finally, laughs out the dying faith, much as Cervantes mocks at chivalry grown old and ridiculous.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new."

Later men may still share in the harvest. We cannot restore the flower. Other fields, other crops. As is the fragmentary life-work of single men, so, we must hope, is the attainment of the most happy former types, of the Venetian, the Florentine, the Athenian, trifling in comparison to all that future humanity may be, and know, and enjoy.

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(Titles of books in italics)

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